

THE END OF ‘TOTAL ARCHIVES’?:
AN ANALYSIS OF CHANGING
ACQUISITION PRACTICES
IN
CANADIAN ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, Canada's publicly funded archival repositories have been reducing their involvement in the acquisition of private-sector records. The decline in central government involvement has been matched by a steady increase in the number and nature of community-based, institutional, or organisational repositories.

The acquisition and preservation of privately generated archival records by the public sector has been a central aspect of Canadian archival practice for many years. It is partly a result of the Canadian perception that government has a significant role to play in the social and cultural affairs of its citizens. It has also resulted from an inclusive definition of the concept of 'archives,' one that has encouraged the preservation of a wide range of historical materials for evidential, informational, and cultural reasons. This concept has been called 'total archives' and has evolved into a 'Canadian archival system.'

This thesis examines the evolution of Canadian acquisition practices, from the beginnings in the mid-1800s to the present day. The first seven chapters trace the history of acquisition policy, which began in the colonial and early Confederation period with the appointment of Douglas Brymner as the first 'national archivist.' The role of Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist and consummate collector, is examined, as are the findings of subsequent Canadian commissions concerned with archival work: the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, in the 1950s, the Royal Commission on Government Organization, in the 1960s, the Commission on Canadian Studies, in the 1970s, and the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, in the 1980s. These chapters trace the activities that influenced archival acquisition at the time, as well as the effect of these events on the archival community's perceptions of the nature of archives and the role of the archivist.

The last chapter examines conditions influencing archival acquisition in Canada in the 1990s. These include the restructuring of government in the face of a growing public deficit, with the consequent reduction or elimination of non-critical public functions. Also discussed is the effect of increased government accountability, as evidenced by access to information legislation, on acquisition. As well, the impact of sophisticated information and telecommunications technologies is reviewed. The archival community's reactions to these changes is explored.

The thesis concludes by considering several questions raised throughout the thesis. What is an archival record? What is the purpose of preserving archival records? What actions may be taken to ensure the preservation of Canada's documentary memory in a time of changing governmental and societal priorities? The reality of territoriality and regional identity, and the importance of preserving society's collective memory, are examined in the context of archival management.

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Introduction

There is presently a disturbing trend in Canada whereby Provincial Archives are forced, for reasons of economy, to reduce drastically or cease altogether the accessioning of material from the private sector which had hitherto been their custom.

H.A. Taylor, 1992¹

Rationale for the Study

In the winter of 1993, the Canadian Council of Archives -- the primary funding agency for archival work in Canada -- disbanded its Acquisition Committee, which had been working since 1989 to develop a national acquisition strategy. Commenting on the decision, the president of the Council suggested that there were 'serious misgivings' about the value of future work on a coordinated acquisition programme.² In 1995, faced with significant budget reductions, the National Archives of Canada announced it would reduce significantly the acquisition of non-government records, including the private records of politicians, businesses, and multicultural groups.³ Other public repositories, including provincial archives and university special collections departments, have markedly reduced their private records acquisition programmes. In the late 1990s, the acquisition and preservation of non-sponsor records by large publicly funded archival repositories seems a rapidly diminishing priority.

¹ '20/20 Vision,' presentation to the Society of American Archivists, Montreal, Quebec, September 1992. Copy obtained privately.

² C. Hives, 'The Evolution of the Canadian Council of Archives and the Question of "Accountability,"' *ACA Bulletin* 20, 2 (November 1995): 8.

³ National Archives of Canada, 1995-96 *Estimates Part III Expenditure Plan* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1995), p. 23, cited in National Archives of Canada, Policy Branch, 'NPT Discussion Paper: The Future of Private Records Acquisition in Canada,' November 1995, p. 3. Copy obtained privately.

At the same time as national and international initiatives are being retrenched, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of archival institutions in Canada, including community, church, association, and institutional repositories. The numbers have jumped from fewer than 60 in the 1950s to over 600 in 1995, a 900 per cent increase. These institutions are actively acquiring and preserving a wide range of records, both public and private, within their own communities. Most are small operations, with one or two archivists, if any, or a range of assistants, mostly part-time volunteers.

In December 1995, the National, Provincial, and Territorial Archivists Committee, composed of the heads of the leading public archives in the country, met to consider 'the plight of the private record.'⁴ This group recognised that Canada's central public repositories no longer seemed to identify the preservation of private records as a priority. At the same time there was a flowering of community-based repositories, working with minimal guidance or coordination. Why would there be a decline in acquisition by larger repositories? Why a growth in the number of community-based institutions?

This thesis began as a search for an answer to the decline of private records acquisition by public archival repositories evident since the late 1980s. Three central causes were identified: the restructuring of government and society as a result of a growing public debt; the requirement for government accountability, evidenced by the passage of access to information legislation; and the development of increasingly sophisticated communications technologies. Each of these actions had changed the nature of communication, information, and records, and each has lead government-funded repositories to restructure their programmes away from acquisition toward more institutionally oriented work.

But these are factors affecting all western societies. Canada is not the only country facing economic stringencies, rising public accountability, and the reality of information technologies. Why would the Canadian situation be any different, if in fact it

⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

was? The answer was found in part in the concept of ‘total archives’, in part in the essential regionalism that is part of the Canadian identity.

In many countries in the world, government archival repositories, particularly at the national level, do not acquire records from private sources. The National Archives in the United States, for example, is responsible for the records of the national government, not for the private records of businesses or organisations. State archives care for state records; historical societies, museums, and universities are most often the primary repositories for private records. These institutions may indeed be publicly funded, but they are separate administrative entities from the archives. In the United Kingdom, the Public Record Office manages the records of the British government, not the papers of politicians. In France, the Archives Nationales cares for the public record; the Bibliothèque Nationale manages non-governmental materials.

Unlike these countries, Canada has long followed a belief that government archival repositories are responsible not just for the government record but also for the records of society, regardless of their public or private character. This philosophy has been adopted not just by the National Archives of Canada but also by provincial repositories, municipal and local government archives, and university archives and special collections. Thus rather than dividing government records and private records between the National Archives and National Library, the Canadian Archives acquires the bulk of unpublished materials of national significance, while the National Library specialises in a limited number of ‘manuscript’ collections. Virtually all provinces have extensive non-governmental records collections; indeed many began by acquiring private records.

This practice of managing all records, public and private, within the archival repository of the government has been called ‘total archives.’ It has long been considered a pillar of Canadian archival theory. Total archives has been defined in terms of three related operations undertaken by one institution. First is the acquisition of records in all media, including such materials as film and television broadcasts, sound recordings, and electronic records. Second is the acquisition of records reflecting all aspects of society, rich and poor, famous and unknown, depicting Canadian life from the literary and artistic

to the scientific and mechanical. Third is the management of records throughout their life cycle, through a records management programme.

As this thesis demonstrates, the concept of total archives includes all of these elements but is more than the sum of their parts. Total archives is not just the idea that an archival repository manages records of all media, from all sectors of society, through all stages of the life cycle. Total archives is premised on the idea that the government has a civic duty to acquire and preserve records representing all players in society, whether the creators of the records are public agencies or private individuals. Total archives is based on a belief that this public responsibility is best executed by one government agency, the archives, rather than divided between archives, libraries, museums, and special collections. Total archives is the expression of Canada's belief in a collective responsibility for its documentary heritage. Central to the total archives concept is the idea that public expenditure on the preservation of private records is valid and legitimate.

This vision of government responsibility is not an archival theory. It is a Canadian philosophy applied to an archival situation. Throughout Canadian society, government has involved itself in the affairs of its citizens to a remarkable extent. For example, the vision of universal medical care is a goal of Canadian society; it is not derived from medical theory. Similarly, the idea of unemployment insurance and social support systems were programmes devised and instituted by politicians, not social workers. These programmes have become part of Canada's public service, accepted and expected by its citizens.

But in the 1990s the vision of government responsibility is changing, not just in Canada but around the world. Governments everywhere are reexamining programmes, often reducing public support. Canada is perhaps suffering more than other countries, for it has found it can no longer afford the largesse of previous years. National and provincial governments are contemplating the implementation of user fees for medical services. They are considering imposing limits on the benefits provided through unemployment insurance. They are also considering their role in the preservation of society's culture, including its documentary heritage. In many jurisdictions governments are rapidly

moving away from the vision of public institutions as total archives. Instead they are focusing on the management of their own institutional records.

At the same time, communities are taking more responsibility for their own affairs, particularly cultural programmes. Locally based historical societies, art galleries, museums, and archives are emerging across the country. Is this a response to restructuring? Is it an independent movement, to which government is responding by reducing its own role? The original question of this thesis, why the decline in acquisition by public repositories, is met by another. Why the rise in community institutions?

In order to answer these questions, this thesis returns to the origins of archival practice in Canada. It was not enough to outline the rise in community repositories, for example, without examining the creation of the public agencies that were their forerunners. As no history of Canadian archival practice has been written, it was necessary to provide essential groundwork before speculating on current and future activities. It is hoped that this necessarily broad analysis serves as a useful basis for future research into specific issues, periods, or events.

The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis examines the history of acquisition practices by Canadian archival repositories; it also considers the philosophies, policies and strategies of the Canadian archival community. It traces the origins of the total archives concept and the idea of an archival system and studies their status and future direction in the 1990s. This thesis is not an institutional history, either of the National Archives of Canada or of the various provincial or other repositories across the country. It can more appropriately be considered an examination of ideas, philosophies, and theories of archival practice, as evidenced by such actions as the passage of legislation, the development of archival policies, and the discussion of archival concepts in the literature. Readers should not expect to find mention of every event in every region of the country over time. In particular, it is important to mention that archival activities in the province of Quebec are mentioned only as they influence a broader national perspective; institutional practices in

that province differ sufficiently from practices in English Canada that any examination of them would have to be framed within a discussion of the specificities of French Canadian politics and government.

Chapter 1 of this thesis examines the establishment of the first repositories in Canada. Total archives was not formally defined until 1972, but the idea was practiced for a full century before then, beginning with the appointment in 1872 of Douglas Brymner as Canada's first 'national archivist.' Brymner sought the records of Canada's history, regardless of their public or private origins.

Brymner's work was expanded by his successor, Arthur Doughty, a consummate collector. Doughty's practices during his long tenure, from 1904 to 1937, are examined in Chapter 2. Also considered are the years from his death to the end of the Second World War; during those years the historical community considered the future direction of the national archives and had a strong influence on archival policy and practice.

Chapter 3 considers the recommendations of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, established in 1949 to determine, and enhance, the government's role in the preservation of Canadian culture. The recommendations of this Commission led to the first concrete expression of public responsibility for social and cultural programmes in Canada.

Chapter 4 examines the archival reaction to the Commission's recommendations. From 1952 to 1972, the archival community had to reconcile the cultural role assigned by this commission with a growing responsibility for government records. This latter issue was elucidated by the Royal Commission on Government Organization, which in 1963 showed how changing communications technologies and an expanded bureaucracy would require archivists to focus more on the practice of records management. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the formal expression of the total archives concept, proclaimed in 1972, the centennial year of the creation of the Public Archives of Canada.

Examining the period from 1972 to 1982, Chapters 5 and 6 consider the findings of two other commissions. The Commission on Canadian Studies, reporting in 1975, was driven by questions of national identity and scholarship. The academic and cultural role it

outlined for archives was not wholly accepted, and archivists urged a reconsideration of the nature and purpose of archives. They suggested that archival records existed to serve administrative and evidential needs beyond those of university-based scholars. From this difference of opinion came the formation of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, which is examined in Chapter 6. Reporting in 1980, this commission acknowledged the administrative, evidential, social, and cultural properties of archival records and urged a flexibility of approach, which it identified as a 'Canadian archival system.'

As a result of this report, Canadians revised the concept of total archives into a vision of an archival system. That system would consist of a network of publicly and privately funded archival institutions, each of which would care for its own institutional records or the records of its community or jurisdiction. In this way the archival heritage of Canada would be preserved, but responsibility would be diffused. Chapter 7 considers the development of this network through the establishment of the Canadian Council on Archives. It also examines the activities of the archival community into the mid-1990s. It concludes with a discussion of the changing orientation of the archival community away from acquisition.

Chapter 8 examines the issues that are affecting acquisition policy in Canada in the 1990s. These include the restructuring of government programmes and priorities in light of economic constraints; the implementation of access to information legislation, and the development of electronic information technologies. The reaction of the archival community to these societal changes is also examined, as is the continuing rise in the number of archival repositories. In the light of these changes, the thesis concludes by considering the purpose for keeping archival records and the role of the archivist in society. The future of archival work, particularly acquisition, is questioned.

Definitions

It is necessary to clarify some of the terminology used in this thesis. The term *acquisition* can refer to the receipt of records by an archival repository, whether those

records come through donations, sales, or transfers. In this thesis, acquisition refers to an institution's receipt of records that were not generated by that institution. This is also referred to as the acquisition of non-sponsor records. It is called private-sector acquisition or private records acquisition when referring specifically to the acquisition by a public repository of records created by a private agency or an individual, association, or group.

In this thesis a *public archival repository* is considered to be any institution created by a government agency for the purpose of managing records, be they public, private, or a combination of both. To be a public archival repository, the agency must be supported by government funds, staffed with public servants, and accessible to the public. This is distinguished from a *private archival repository*, which is established and funded primarily through non-public funds. An example of a private repository is a corporate archives. *Community archives* are neither wholly public or wholly private. They are repositories established at the local level, often with government funding but not necessarily as part of a government agency. They often serve a specific 'community,' such as a geographical region, but sometimes they may follow thematic lines, such as an archives of the records of women or an archives of sport. They care not just for institutional records but, more often, for records acquired from various sources. Community archives may be managed by professional archivists but they may also engage the services of clerks, assistants, or volunteers. It is their quasi-governmental status, local focus, and acquisition orientation that define them as 'community.'

Reference is also made to *institutional archival repositories*. These repositories exist solely to manage the records of their sponsor institution and do not acquire records from other sources, whether public or private. A publicly funded archives may be an institutional archives if it is responsible only for the records of its government. A corporate archives that acquires only the records of its sponsor corporation is an institutional archives. (An institutional archives is different from an archival institution, which is simply another term for an archival repository, whether public, private, community, or institutional.)

The definitions of the terms *records* and *archives* are provided throughout the thesis, as related to the use of the terms at a particular time. In general, 'records' refers to the documentary evidence of actions and transactions; 'archives' to that subset of records deemed to have enduring value. When 'public records' are discussed, these refer to the documentary evidence created by government agencies. When 'private records' or 'private-sector records' are mentioned, these refer to documentary evidence created by agencies or individuals other than government bodies. The term 'archives' is also used to refer to the institutions, such as the Public Archives of Canada, as appropriate. The conclusion proposes definitions of the terms 'records' and 'archives' relevant to the 1990s.

Methodology

To examine the concept of total archives, and the future of archival acquisition, it was necessary to search into the past. This thesis is based heavily on historical research, primarily using original archival sources. It was necessary to study the archives of the archives. A wide range of archival records were consulted, including the official records of public repositories such as the National Archives of Canada and various provincial archives. As well, the author reviewed the private records of historical societies such as the Canadian Historical Association, archival associations such as the Association of Canadian Archivists, and individuals involved with archival work, including provincial and national archivists. Also examined were the records of various royal commissions, including the Massey and Glassco Commissions. When these official records were unavailable or incomplete, it was necessary to seek out the private records of members of those commissions. These personal records often contained comprehensive documentation of the events in question.

After the early 1980s, when the historical record no longer told the tale, the author turned to the players in the process, the archivists themselves. A range of interviews was conducted with archivists across the country. Many of the interviews were recorded and transcripts prepared. A list of interviews is in the Appendix. All the archivists

interviewed were welcoming and helpful, not only eager to help a student and fellow archivist, but also supportive of and interested in the chosen topic.

When records and interviews were not enough, the author turned to the literature in the field. Government reports, professional journals and newsletters, and archival annual reports were key records of both facts and ideas. The Canadian archival journal, *Archivaria*, proved a rich source of evidence about the evolution of archival philosophy. It has served Canadians as the platform for extended debates, as well as the field for the occasional battle. For any study of the intellectual development of archival practice in Canada, it serves as a primary resource. Other journals provided not only historical facts but also evidence of the thought processes of individuals and groups over time.

References and Sources

Within the text, the proper names of organisations or agencies are given as they were at the time an action or event took place. For example, the National Archives of Canada was formerly known as the Public Archives of Canada and before that the Dominion Archives. Similarly, individual titles, such as Dominion Archivist, are cited so as to be consistent with the time in question. In footnotes, the archival records of the National Archives of Canada from 1872 to the present are referred to as National Archives of Canada Records, or NAC Records, as that is how they are identified by the repository. As a repository for the various records consulted, the National Archives of Canada is identified by that name or by the abbreviation NAC. To aid the researcher, full citations for notes are provided at the beginning of each chapter, even if items were referred to in previous chapters. English spelling has been used throughout the text, but Canadian spelling has been retained for proper names, such as the Royal Commission on Government Organization, or within direct quotations. Unless otherwise identified, all references to money are cited in Canadian dollars. Abbreviations have been provided only when necessary, following a full reference to the terms in question.

Citations in the bibliography are divided into several sections. The first section identifies archival records used, listed alphabetically by repository and author. This is

followed by a list of the major journals and newsletters reviewed, and by a list of serial government and organisational publications examined. Also included is a selected list of theses and dissertations.

The section on selected articles and unpublished papers includes three categories of materials: firstly, items used in the research for the thesis; secondly, items identified and considered relevant, whether or not they were directly used in the research for the thesis; and thirdly, items worthy of mention that might otherwise not be identified by researchers, perhaps because they are in unusual or inaccessible sources. Unpublished materials include individual government or organisational reports or discussion papers, as opposed to the series of reports and publications identified earlier. Also included are speeches and presentations to conferences or seminars.

The final section, on books and monographs, includes publications both directly and indirectly relevant, as well as full-length government publications not included in the section on serial publications. In both the listings of books and articles, multiple entries for the same author are entered chronologically, to show the evolution of their writing.

The Appendix is a list of archivists interviewed for this thesis. It identifies the person interviewed, the date of the interview (or interviews if more than one), and the individual's position at the time of the interview, and the location of the interview. Some interviews were recorded and transcribed; those materials remain in the possession of the author at this time.

‘THREE EMPTY ROOMS AND VERY VAGUE INSTRUCTIONS’:

EARLY ARCHIVAL PRACTICE, 1857-1904

Being entirely alone, I had full scope to adopt any system I chose, without let, hindrance, or remonstrance.

Douglas Brymner, 1890¹

Introduction

Canadian archival practice did not emerge through the adoption of existing European or English theories, philosophies, or policies. Canada’s first archivists were guided by public, political, and institutional pressures, by their own personalities, and by their vision of the purpose for preserving archival records. Their efforts were restricted by ill-defined objectives, insufficient resources, and limited government support for, or even understanding, of their work. They chose their own path, one that valued archival records for their historical and research use rather than their legal or administrative importance.

Accepting the premise that archival records were precious historical resources, these archivists saw themselves as collectors, organisers, and scholars. They recognised the distinction between the official records of government and the private records of non-official groups or individuals. However, the purpose for preserving both was the same: to establish a ‘great storehouse’ of history.² To build that storehouse, the acquisition and preservation of a wide range of records was essential.

¹ Canada, Archives, *Report on Canadian Archives, Douglas Brymner, Archivist* (Ottawa, ON: Queen’s Printer, 1890), p. xii. Hereafter cited as Canada, Archives, *Report* followed by both the reporting and publication years.)

² Ibid, p. xv.

Concern for Canada's archival records emerged in the 1800s as citizens grew interested in its history and origins. Literary-minded men were joining together in various regions to form scientific associations or historical and literary societies. Some were founding museums or libraries. Some were acquiring antiquarian or archaeological objects. Others were seeking out historical manuscripts and pioneer reminiscences. There was a strong impetus to collect, document, and preserve all aspects of their pioneering origins.

These same men also began lobbying their governments, first colonial and provincial, then federal, to recognise the value of historical information and, more pointedly, to preserve the archival records of the government. They recognised that both public and private records were essential to the writing of history. Historical and literary societies willingly acquired artifacts, books, and personal reminiscences. They considered it the role of government to preserve public records, that is, those records created by or received by the government, be it colonial, provincial, or national. This was a task requiring immediate attention, for Canada was a country with an erratic political history; governments had existed and records had been created in any number of diverse locations. The official records of Canada's past could be found in government offices or archival repositories in Great Britain and in France, in storage in superseded colonial capitals, and even in the private possession of retired officials. It was the job of the government, argued the historical societies, to secure these public records.

In order to *preserve* the record, government first had to *find* the record. Rather than managing the records created by and held in their own government offices, as was done by the archival repositories of countries such as Great Britain or France, Canadians had first to search institutions such as the Public Record Office, the Bibliothèque Nationale, or the British Museum, or seek out retired officers or politicians, looking for records relevant to Canada's history. With this emphasis on the identification and copying of records, archival work was more a job of detection than custodianship. Confusion arose, especially in the federal government, as to who was responsible for which records: public, private, on site, or distant. This confusion was compounded by

inadequate physical facilities, personality conflicts, and government inattention. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the acquisition and preservation of private records was an active pursuit, but less attention was paid to the management of the official public records.

The first significant government attempts at archival work in Canada were the establishment in 1857 of a Records Commission in Nova Scotia, headed by Thomas Beamish Akins, and the appointment in 1872 of Douglas Brymner to preserve the archival records of the Dominion of Canada. The work of these two men, undertaken with limited guidance and support, resulted in great successes, but also in confusion both within and outside the government over the nature of archival practice.

An Atmosphere of Scholarship and Nationalism

The nineteenth century saw a growing interest in historical inquiry not just in Canada but across much of the western world, including those countries arising out of the British empire, such as Australia, South Africa, the United States, and Canada. As the conquest of the land gave way to a more settled, urban society, historical study became a popular leisure-time activity for a new colonial class: 'men of affairs' such as lawyers, politicians, and businessmen.³ Eager to document the discovery and development of their new country, these self-taught scholars produced extensive encyclopedias, compendiums, and narratives. In Canada, one such publication was Peter Fisher's *Sketches of New Brunswick, Containing an Account of the First Settlement of the Province, with a Brief Description of the County, Climate, Production, Inhabitants, Government, Rivers, Towns, Settlements, Public Institutions, Trade, Revenue, Population, &c.*, published in 1825. Another was Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*, published in 1829. These early histories did not incorporate extensive original research; most were written from previously published sources, from myths and

³ For a discussion of the role of culture and the concept of leisure time in Canadian society, see M. Tippet, *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1990), esp. chapter 1.

stories, or from the personal knowledge or experience of the author.⁴ But in the context of nineteenth-century scholarship, these works were considered serious contributions to historical knowledge, not amateur endeavours.

The world of research, and western society in general, were shaken by the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's radical theory of evolution. Darwin suggested that the natural world was governed by laws and principles distinct from the dictates of religion and morality. His revolutionary conclusions about the origins of man dislodged society's established social, religious, and moral assumptions. More important than his actual findings, Darwin's research methodology altered forever the nature of academic study. In the face of his bluntly scientific analysis of humanity, scholars could no longer write of events present or past without first seeking the 'facts.'⁵

Historical research began to follow more scientific lines. The western world was increasingly attracted to the new 'seminar' method of education, to emerging Ph.D. programmes, and to the use of original information, historical or scientific, in academic pursuits. There was widespread interest in the teachings of German historian Leopold von Ranke, who encouraged students to see and recreate history objectively, to study the evidence of past events, and to portray them clearly and without bias.⁶

In this atmosphere of growing academic sophistication, an historical profession began to emerge in Canada. In 1894 Professor George Wrong was appointed to the first chair of history at the University of Toronto. In the same year the economic historian Adam Shortt began lecturing at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. In 1897 Wrong founded the first Canadian historical journal, the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, based on the *English Historical Review*, first published in 1885, and

⁴ For a review of the historical literature of this time, see C.F. Klinck, ed., *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1976).

⁵ See Charles Darwin, *Single Works, On the Origin of the Species* (London, UK: John Murray, 1859). George Wrong commented on this phase of historical development in 'The Beginnings of Historical Criticism in Canada: A Retrospect, 1896-1936,' *Canadian Historical Review* 17, 1 (March 1936): 1-8. For a detailed examination of this development in historical scholarship and Canadian historiography at this time, see C. Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing, 1900-1970* (Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press, 1976).

⁶ For an examination of the influence of von Ranke in Canada, see Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*.

the *American Historical Review*, begun in 1896. Wrong, as editor of the new journal, insisted that historical articles submitted must be based on original research.⁷

Historians began to draw their conclusions from objectively examined facts and proofs, not from interpretations, legends, or fictions. The next logical step was to gather together the evidence needed for these studies: the original records. Archival records were critical research tools. But where were these records to come from and how were they to be preserved? Historical and literary societies had no qualms about preserving private records such as reminiscences or diaries, but, as shall be seen, they considered it the job of government to manage its own records.

Early Government Care of Archival Records

Various attempts had been made by pre-Confederation governments to protect the public record. The earliest effort appears to have been in 1731, when Gilles Hocquart, the Intendant of New France, appealed to the King Louis XV for funds to construct a fireproof building for archival records. His request was not granted. In the 1760s, after their defeat by the British in the Seven Years' War, the French removed vast quantities of records from the colony, leaving only those necessary for continued administration. The transferred records eventually found their way into French archives.⁸

Under British rule, several inquiries were made by government officials about the care of historical records, particularly those documenting the French regime. In 1787, Lord Dorchester, the Commander-in-Chief of Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, appointed a committee to consider the state of the government's records. An inventory was made but no further action taken. In 1831 a resolution was presented to the Quebec Legislative Assembly by the Hon. Mr. Stuart concerning the collection of historical information. Some monies were voted for the identification of records, with a primary

⁷ See for example the editorial in *Review of Historical Publications*, 4, 1899 (1900): 84.

⁸ This information is taken in part from a handwritten history of archival activity in Canada, apparently written by Arthur Doughty. See [A. Doughty], 'PAC History,' n.d., National Archives of Canada Records, National Archives of Canada, RG 37, Vol. 303, File: PAC History. See also I. Wilson, '“A Noble Dream”: The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 22.

focus on copying records found in remote locations. In 1845, the political rebel Louis-Joseph Papineau was commissioned to identify and copy records in archives in France during his exile from Canada.⁹ In 1851, Georges Faribault was sent to France to obtain copies of historical records.¹⁰ In 1853, P. L. Morin travelled to France to prepare a list of maps and plans, and in 1857 R. P. Martin also went abroad to copy various French documents.¹¹

The government's perception was that the historical records of Canada's past had research value, and the acquisition of the information in those records by copying was a valuable exercise. The preservation of records in Canadian government offices was not seen to be so critical. In the two centuries of Canadian settlement before Confederation in 1867, no official commitment was made to identify and preserve original government records.

Archival Activity in Nova Scotia

The first sustained government action to care for its historical records took place in Nova Scotia in the 1850s. Nova Scotia journalist and politician Joseph Howe was a great advocate of the preservation and dissemination of historical materials. 'A wise nation,' he claimed,

preserves its records, gathers up its muniments, repairs its great public structures, decorates the tombs of its illustrious dead, and fosters national pride and love of country by perpetual reference to the sacrifices and glories of the past.¹²

In 1857, Howe brought a resolution to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, begging that 'the ancient records and documents illustrative of the History and progress of Society in this Province ... be examined, preserved and arranged.'¹³

⁹ This is discussed in J.H. Archer, 'A Study of Archival Institutions in Canada,' (Ph.D dissertation, Queen's University, 1969), esp. pp. 41-42.

¹⁰ D. McArthur, 'The Canadian Archives and the Writing of Canadian History,' *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1934): 6-7.

¹¹ See [Doughty], 'PAC History.'

¹² J. Howe, quoted in J.C. Webster, 'The Opening of the New Archives Building of Nova Scotia,' *Canadian Historical Review* 12, 1 (March 1931): 44-45.

¹³ Nova Scotia, House of Assembly, *Journals* (30 April 1857), quoted in Archer, 'A Study of Archival Institutions,' p. 48.

Howe's plea led to the appointment of Thomas Beamish Akins as Commissioner of Public Records for Nova Scotia. Akins, a lawyer, historian, and author, was not appointed 'archivist'; he was assigned neither space, facilities, nor a permanent position. Rather, he was given a seemingly well-defined task: to identify, compile, and disseminate important documents relating to the province's history.¹⁴ The accepted view was that Akins would be able to prepare a collection of essential historical records on the colony of Nova Scotia with speed and ease, completing the job within a year.¹⁵

It did not take long for Akins to realise that his task was not so easily accomplished. In 1860, he noted that 'I had hoped to have brought the object of this commission to a satisfactory conclusion during the present year, but after close and assiduous attention, have found it quite impossible.'¹⁶ In 1864, he claimed that the work would be finished as soon as he completed an index to the public grants and 'some few other matters of a public character.'¹⁷ In reality, Akins continued working sporadically on the records until his death in 1891, thirty-four years after he had begun.¹⁸

As Commissioner of Records, Akins concentrated on the identification and preservation of the historical records of the Nova Scotia government and its predecessors, rather than the care of more recent public records.¹⁹ There was a clear historical perspective to the work. As Akins' assistant noted in a log entry in 1858, he had been 'engaged all day among the miscellaneous papers but find them principally of recent date and little interest.'²⁰ After identifying historical records scattered throughout the

¹⁴ For the history of Akins' work in Nova Scotia, see B.C. Cuthbertson, 'Thomas Beamish Akins: British North America's Pioneer Archivist,' *Acadiensis* 7, 1 (Autumn 1977): 86-102; and C.V. Carroll, 'Developing an "Historical Laboratory:" The Genesis of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia,' in B.L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, ON: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), pp. 178-211.

¹⁵ Nova Scotia, Assembly Committee on Printing, 'Report' (1858), T.B. Akins Collection, Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), MG 1, vol. 8, no. 3.

¹⁶ Nova Scotia, Record Commission, 'Report' (1860), *ibid.*, vol. 1504, no. 37.

¹⁷ Nova Scotia, Record Commission, 'Report' (1864), *ibid.*

¹⁸ Carroll, 'Developing an "Historical Laboratory,"' p. 180.

¹⁹ Akins was also commissioned as Provincial Librarian, 'without pecuniary remuneration,' on the assumption that the two tasks, preservation of records and acquisition of books, could be done simultaneously. Akins to the Earl of Mulgrave, Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of Nova Scotia, 23 March 1860, Akins Collection, vol. 1504, no. 37.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, no. 1.

government's buildings, Akins and his assistants contacted repositories in England, the United States, and other Canadian colonies, seeking 'copies of any despatches or documents that may be found necessary to complete our files.'²¹ Akins launched an extensive investigation, arguing that 'it is probable that documents of value in reference to provincial history may exist in some of the County offices and even in private hands.'²² He commissioned a variety of copyists over the years, such as Alfred Kingston, sent to the Public Record Office, and W. B. John, to the British Museum.²³

Akins was not ignorant of the need to manage government records better. In an effort to prevent the loss of records removed from government premises, Akins worked for legislation to protect the archival records of the government. The act, passed in 1861, clarified government ownership of all books, papers, and records of all public offices in the province. It also imposed penalties for any persons removing such documents from official custody.²⁴

In spite of this legislation, no archival repository was established to house the records copied, identified, and preserved by Akins and his team. Records were stored in any available space in government buildings. Akins himself complained often about 'the want of a proper place to Deposit' the records, a fault also criticised by journalists and historians.²⁵ Nova Scotia's *Acadian Recorder* appealed for a 'recognised centre where contributions to Provincial history may be ... given to the public.' The newspaper complained that:

It is a standing disgrace to a country, so rich in historical associations as ours, that we should suffer the land marks of our early history to be swept away, one after another, by the wave of time, without any effort to rescue them from destruction.²⁶

²¹ Ibid., vol. 8, no. 3.

²² Nova Scotia, Record Commission, 'Report' (1858), *ibid.*

²³ See H. Piers, 'History of the Public Records of Nova Scotia,' Harry Piers Collection, PANS, MG 1, vol. 1051A, file 1, p. 22.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 14. See also Carroll, 'Developing an "Historical Laboratory,"' p. 180.

²⁵ Nova Scotia, Record Commission, 'Report' (1864), Akins Collection, vol. 8, no. 3. See also the report for 1858, *ibid.*

²⁶ The newspaper's criticism contained strong nationalistic overtones. 'Foreigners, and especially Yankees,' it lamented, 'have been cunning enough to dive into our archives and extract therefrom materials which it should have been the privilege of Nova Scotians themselves to have made use of.' *Acadian Recorder*, 22 August 1863, quoted in D.C. Harvey, 'The Contribution of the Nova

The Nova Scotia Historical Society emphasised the importance of preserving a wide range of historical records. In its report of 1878 the Society argued that ‘interesting, not to say learned publications, are only the products of minds thoroughly trained and enthusiastic in historical and antiquarian pursuits, and more than that, work of this kind can only be done in the blaze of the light of great collections of books, pamphlets, manuscripts, etc., bearing on the subject under examination.’ While anxious that the government establish a repository for public records, the Society was itself actively acquiring and preserving private manuscripts. The ‘objects of collection desired’ included ‘manuscript statements and narratives of pioneer settlers,’ ‘diaries, narratives and documents relative to the Loyalists,’ ‘files of newspapers, books, pamphlets,’ and ‘books of all kinds.’²⁷

In the light of a lack of suitable storage facilities, publication was seen as a primary method of preserving documents. The dissemination of multiple copies would reduce the loss occasioned by disasters such as fires or floods.²⁸ Arguing that the ‘indiscriminate’ publication of all documents would be too costly for the benefit derived, the Nova Scotia government determined that selective publishing was a better option.²⁹ In 1865, the government agreed to finance the publication of selected documents, ‘in a single octavo volume of moderate size.’³⁰ In 1869 Akins published *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*, which included ‘the portions of our archives which possess the greatest historical value.’³¹

By the time of Akins’ death in 1891, much had been accomplished to preserve historical information, including the passage of legislation, the reproduction of records held in other repositories, and the publication of key documents. But the government had

Scotia Historical Society to the Legislative Library,’ *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 26 (1945): 121.

²⁷ ‘Objects of Collection Desired,’ *ibid.* (1879): 3-5.

²⁸ For a discussion of the role of documentary publishing by archival repositories, see L.M. Coles, ‘The Decline of Documentary Publishing in Canadian Archives, 1865-1984,’ (M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1984.)

²⁹ Nova Scotia, Record Commission, ‘Report’ (1860), Akins Collection, vol. 8, no. 3.

³⁰ Nova Scotia, Record Commission, ‘Report’ (1865), *ibid.*

³¹ T.B. Akins, ed., *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia* (Halifax, NS: Charles Annand, 1869), p. ii.

not established a permanent archival repository and had not sanctioned any ongoing archival work. The management of archival records was perceived as a project with a finite conclusion. Once the records of colonial times had been preserved and published, and Nova Scotia's history was thus publicly available, the work of archival management would be complete.

Archival Activity in the Dominion of Canada

The preservation of archival records at the national level began in earnest in 1871, prompted by a petition from the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, which had been working actively to preserve records since its formation in 1823. As was the case in colonial Nova Scotia, the work of the post-Confederation federal government focused on identifying and copying scattered records. However, personality clashes, territorial battles, and confusion over responsibilities created a complicated political and administrative environment. By the time the government acknowledged, in the late 1890s, that its own records were in disarray, the emphasis on acquisition that had developed over the previous quarter century was entrenched.

The Efforts of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec

The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec had been founded in 1823 at the urging of George Ramsey, the ninth Earl of Dalhousie and the Governor-in-Chief of Canada from 1819 to 1828. He sought to form a society 'not entirely "Antiquarian" but Historical rather and Canadian.'³² Part of the work of the Society would be 'to search for, and preserve, all documents or tracts that relate to the early history of the Country.'³³ According to the Society's charter, it existed 'for the prosecution of researches into the

³² Lord Dalhousie to the Hon. W. Smith, 27 April 1823, quoted in Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, *The Centenary Volume of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 1824-1924* (Montreal, PQ: Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 1924), p. 11.

³³ Dalhousie to Vallieres de St. Read, 27 April 1823, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 13.

early history of Canada, for the recovering, procuring, and publishing, interesting documents and useful information ... from which public benefit may be expected.'³⁴

For many years the Society received colonial government support for its work. Dalhousie had promised public funding, and he provided £100 from his own resources to initiate the project.³⁵ Over the years the government provided several grants for the acquisition of historical documents, averaging £50 annually. The Montreal-based Society also enjoyed the use of vacant public offices for research and storage. But access to these facilities came at a price. The political turmoil of the 1830s and resulting confusion over the location and structure of the government left the Society unsure of future occupancy of public offices. Worse, in 1854 and 1862 the organisation suffered two disastrous fires. The first destroyed its offices in the old parliament buildings, leaving the association homeless; the second consumed 3,300 of the 4,000 books in its library.³⁶ By the late 1860s, the Society anxiously sought more suitable conditions for itself and its collections. With Confederation in 1867, it also grew concerned that the records of the newly established federal government were equally vulnerable to disaster.

In 1870, in a speech 'On Canadian Archives,' Society member Henry H. Miles urged the identification and preservation of the historical records of the various governments in Canada.

Owing to various causes, and, amongst these, to the former migratory character of our Governments and Parliaments, and, partly to the recent establishment of the Constitution of the Dominion, it is yet impossible to pronounce what we really have in the shape of Archives, or to point out precisely the localities in which they are lodged.³⁷

Miles defined as archival those records 'of facts and events which are of a more important and public character.' He acknowledged that these public records were scattered in locations 'very distant from each other,' and that 'many, perhaps the most valuable, are not the property of the Province.' He compared the Canadian situation with work done in

³⁴ Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 'Charter,' in *ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁵ Dalhousie to Vallieres de St. Read, 27 April 1823, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁶ W.J. Anderson, 'The Archives of Canada,' *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* (1871): 118-131.

³⁷ H.H. Miles, 'On Canadian Archives,' *ibid.* (1870): 63-64.

England, where records had been made ‘strictly public property’ to ensure their ‘safe custody.’ He praised work done in the United States, noting that state librarians were ‘liberally compensated’ for the care of public records. He also explicitly cited the example set in Nova Scotia with the work of Akins’ Nova Scotia Record Commission.³⁸

Society president W. J. Anderson forwarded a copy of Miles’ published speech to the politician Joseph Howe, who had been such a strong advocate of archival work in Nova Scotia. Anderson entreated Howe to encourage the new federal government to create a position similar to Akins’. But in spite of his previous support for the preservation of historical records in Nova Scotia, Howe did not endorse this proposal. His perception, one held by many public officials, was that records had to be *old* to be worthy of preservation in an archival repository. ‘The Dominion has lasted but four years,’ he reasoned. ‘Its records are so few and recent that their preservation would hardly afford work for a commission.’³⁹

Members of the Society were unsatisfied with this answer. It was irrelevant that the country had only existed formally for only four years; in reality its history stretched back two hundred. In 1871, the Society forwarded a petition to the government of Canada, urging the protection of the ‘public records, documents and official papers illustrative of the past history and progress of society in Canada.’⁴⁰ They referred to the systems in place in countries such as Great Britain, France and the United States and to the work done by the ‘Sister Province of Nova Scotia.’ They urged that ‘preliminary steps should be taken, as early as possible, for carefully examining the Canadian Records, sorting and classifying them, with a view to the preparation of a catalogue indicating their contents, and, ultimately, providing in a permanent manner not only for safe custody but also convenient reference.’⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 53, 63-64, 68-70.

³⁹ Quoted in Anderson, ‘The Archives of Canada,’ p. 126.

⁴⁰ Canada, Archives, *Report, 1883* (1884), p. 1.

⁴¹ Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, ‘Petition,’ 1871, NAC Records, vol. 104.

The Appointment of Douglas Brymner

With the help of the politician Sir Alexander T. Galt, the Society's petition was favourably received by the House of Commons and its Library Committee. By the time the petition was approved, the government had allocated its funds for 1871, so the money vote was postponed to the next session.⁴² It was not until June 1872 that Douglas Brymner, a 42-year-old journalist and former associate editor of the *Montreal Daily Record*, was appointed Canada's first archivist.

Officially, the provincial governments had taken responsibility for the nation's cultural pursuits at the time of Confederation in 1867; therefore the federal government did not establish a specific department for cultural or artistic affairs. It was determined that the Department of Agriculture would be responsible for arts and culture; Brymner was made a senior second class clerk in that Department, at a salary of \$1,200 per annum.

The Department assigned Brymner two diverse tasks. First was the 'collecting of Public Archives'; second was to conduct 'a preliminary enquiry for the getting of information on Agriculture.'⁴³ During the fifty percent of his time allotted to archival investigation, Brymner was to inquire 'into the existence of Public Documents, and the place, condition, and keeping in which they were in the several Provinces of *Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia* and *New Brunswick*.'⁴⁴ Brymner's mandate was to seek out the historical records of predecessor governments, regardless of location. It was implicit that he would acquire, copy, or otherwise secure the records, or the information in them, but his work was never more explicitly outlined. According to Brymner, he was given 'three empty rooms and very vague instructions.'⁴⁵

⁴² Canada, Privy Council, 'Report of a Committee of the Privy Council,' 2 August 1871, NAC Records, vol. 104.

⁴³ Canada, Privy Council, 'Report of a Committee of the Privy Council,' 20 June 1872, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Canada, Subcommittee on Historical Documents, 'Report,' contained in Canada, Senate, 'Minutes of Proceedings of the Senate of Canada,' 9 May 1873, *ibid.*, p. 384.

⁴⁵ Canada, Archives. *Report, 1889* (1890), p. ii. The history of the European copying programmes is discussed in P. Bower, 'The Colonial Office Group of the Public Record Office, London, with Particular Reference to Atlantic Canada,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 5 (1974): 5-28, and in B.G. Wilson, 'Bringing Home Canada's Archival Heritage: The London Office of the Public Archives of Canada, 1872-1986,' *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985): 28-42.

A Plethora of Archival Activity

At the time of Brymner's appointment, the Library of Parliament had long been collecting historical materials from private sources. The question arose of the relationship between the two agencies. Soon after Brymner began the task of identifying public records, a Library of Parliament Subcommittee was formed to consider the question of 'augmenting the present collection of manuscripts, illustrative of the early history of *Canada*, and of rendering such materials available for the purpose of historical inquiry.'⁴⁶

The Subcommittee perceived a clear distinction between public and private records. However, it did not see the need for separate repositories to house records from different sources. Rather, it advocated a central record office which would house three types of records: official records of the federal government, either originals or copies; private records from all sources; and historical records, again either copies or originals, from colonial and provincial governments. The Sub-Committee explicitly advocated the acquisition of the records of administrations other than the federal government. It acknowledged that provincial governments had legitimate 'property and Civil rights' but urged that

any documents not required to be retained by the local authorities, and which they might be willing to assign to the care of the Dominion should be transferred to Ottawa, whenever suitable provision shall have been made for their safe custody. And any papers retained by the Local Government which might hereafter prove to be of general historical interest, should in the opinion of the Committee be copied, and the transcripts preserved in the Dominion Record Office.⁴⁷

While approving of Brymner's work with the Department of Agriculture, the Subcommittee recommended that 'some competent person, well versed in Canadian history, and acquainted with the character and extent of the manuscript collections already existing, in the Library of Parliament, and in other public or private Institutions in Canada,' travel to London and Paris to obtain copies of 'rare and valuable' historical records. The Subcommittee urged that attention also be paid to identifying records in

⁴⁶ Canada, Subcommittee on Historical Documents, 'Report,' p. 383.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 385.

British Columbia, Manitoba, and the Hudson's Bay Territories. For the task, it recommended M. l'Abbé H.A.B. Verreault, President of the Montreal Historical Society and Principal of the Jacques Cartier Normal School.⁴⁸

In what turned into a catalogue of confusion, both Brymner and Verreault ended up seeking records in Europe. Brymner was sent abroad to contact the War Office, the Colonial Office, the office of the Emigration Commissioners, the Hudson's Bay Company, and any other organisations holding documents, both public and private, 'which have a bearing on the settlement or history of Canada.'⁴⁹ The Subcommittee dispatched Verreault with a similar mandate. Brymner and Verreault ended up working on similar tasks, apparently without knowledge of the other; on more than one occasion they 'unwittingly went over the same ground twice.'⁵⁰ Brymner went so far as to initiate a programme for copy government and private records in Europe; in 1878, he formalised this into a London Office of the Canadian Archives.⁵¹

While Brymner and Verreault were crossing each other's paths in Europe, the Canadian government was busy developing yet another system for the care of its records. This post-Confederation records system was under the care of the Secretary of State, the Hon. James C. Atkins. As Registrar General, Atkins was required 'to have charge of the State correspondence [and] to keep all State records and papers not specifically transferred to other Departments.'⁵² Some of these state records included pre-Confederation documents that had not been transferred into storage or to Brymner's three rooms. Confusion, and conflict, soon arose between the Secretary of State and the Department of Agriculture.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 384. T.B. Atkins was also mentioned as a suitable candidate. Note that Verreault's name was also spelled as Verreau in some original documents.

⁴⁹ J. Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to Douglas Brymner, 22 January 1873, NAC Records, vol. 104.

⁵⁰ Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 'Report of the Delegates Sent to Ottawa Literary Convention,' 24 October 1877, *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* (1877-1879): 57. See also J.M. LeMoine, 'The Archives of Canada,' *ibid.* (1879): 5.

⁵¹ See Wilson, 'Bringing Home Canada's Archival Heritage.'

⁵² Quoted in J. Atherton, 'The Origins of the Public Archives Records Centre, 1897-1956,' *Archivaria* 8 (Summer 1979): 35.

A particular conflict involved a quantity of government records found in storage in Quebec. In November 1872, Brymner sought to transfer to his department a variety of colonial records housed in the Jacques Cartier Normal School in Montreal, records possibly brought to his attention by Verreault.⁵³ Hearing of the existence of the records, the Secretary of State intervened, obtaining Cabinet approval to place the records in his own office instead. Atkins argued that ‘arranging and classifying of those important documents should be made, together with those of his Department since Confederation, by the same person.’⁵⁴ That person was to be Henry J. Morgan, a clerk in the Secretary of State’s department. Morgan had started with the government in 1853, as a child of 11, serving as messenger in the Privy Council office. In 1864 he joined the Secretary of State’s department as a clerk, earning promotions on a regular basis. He was also the author or editor of a number of historical and reference works. Emboldened perhaps by his historical and authorial successes, Morgan believed that responsibility for the government’s archival records fell to him, not to Douglas Brymner.⁵⁵

In a confidential report written in 1897, Under-Secretary of State Joseph Pope outlined the history of the Quebec records incident, a conflict which ultimately resulted in a pivotal decision over responsibility for archives. Pope noted that, after Brymner had identified the Quebec documents and recommended their transfer to the Department of Agriculture, Morgan tried to ‘forestall Mr. Brymner’ in order to start a ‘rival institution’ in the Secretary of State’s department.

Accordingly on the 31st October, 1873, at a time when the Government of Sir John Macdonald was in the throes of dissolution, Mr. Morgan prevailed upon the Secretary of State of the day to put through a Minute of Council, which I cannot believe was ever considered, authorizing him to go down to Montreal and bring up these papers Mr. Morgan duly proceeded to Montreal, brought these papers up to Ottawa and deposited them in this Department, where they became the nucleus of what is known as the ‘Records Branch.’⁵⁶

⁵³ Lowe to Brymner, 7 November 1872, NAC Records, vol. 104.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Atherton, ‘The Origins of the Public Archives Records Centre,’ p. 36.

⁵⁵ See Henry Morgan Papers, MG 29, D61, NAC. See also Canada, Secretary of State Records, RG 6-s-1, vol. 128, file 1130/07.

⁵⁶ J. Pope, Under-Secretary of State, to R. W. Scott, Secretary of State, 7 January 1897, Secretary of State Records, vol. 105, File: Book, p. 2.

Pope claimed that Morgan assumed the title of Keeper of the Records ‘gradually and without any warrant of the Governor in Council,’ and in ‘avowed rivalry to Mr. Brymner.’⁵⁷ According to Pope, Morgan falsified documents, including the recommendation to the Governor General for his ‘promotion’ to Keeper of the Records. Morgan, Pope claimed, signed the documents himself and later destroyed them.⁵⁸ Morgan quickly formalised his archival tasks: he collected government records, conducted searches upon request, and established and charged fees for research work.⁵⁹ This in spite of the fact that Brymner was still officially responsible for ‘collecting the Public Records.’⁶⁰

By 1878, the relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Secretary of State had become so convoluted that Brymner found it necessary to write a ‘Memorandum on Archives.’ His overt aim was to clarify the ‘misunderstanding ... as to the Department charged with the collection and custody of the Historical Records of the Dominion.’ Brymner was also trying to justify why the Quebec records, still a source of strife, should be transferred into his custody. In his memorandum, Brymner identified two distinct archival functions: the care of departmental records, and the acquisition of historical materials. The departments of government, he argued, had their own archives, kept departmentally, comprising the non-current records of the department itself. Records generated by departments were used, filed, and, ‘where the papers are not so numerous as to lead to inconvenience,’ retained in the same rooms where regular clerical work was done.⁶¹

Historical records, on the other hand, were ‘papers to be found in various quarters, bearing on the history of the Dominion and its various Provinces.’ Responsibility for

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 3. See also Secretary of State, ‘Dossier 5164,’ 27 June/18 August 1881, Secretary of State Records, vol. 46, File: 4990-6268. The memorandum cover refers to ‘H.J. Morgan, Keeper of the Records.’

⁵⁸ Pope to Scott, 7 January 1897, p. 3. The lack of any documentary evidence to show how Morgan came to be appointed Keeper of the Records lends weight to Pope’s suggestion that Morgan destroyed the records in question.

⁵⁹ Canada, Secretary of State, ‘Dossier 5164,’ 27 June/18 August 1881.

⁶⁰ Canada, Privy Council, ‘Report of a Committee of the Privy Council,’ 20 June 1872, NAC Records, vol. 104.

⁶¹ D. Brymner, ‘Memorandum on Archives,’ 11 December 1878, NAC Records, vol. 104.

these had been placed in the hands of the Minister of Agriculture in 1871. Brymner argued that the Quebec records rightfully belonged with the historical records. They ‘form no part of the records of the Department of State, a portion being Public Archives, and others which were also lying in the vaults, but not mentioned in the application, belonging to the Province of Quebec, to whose custody they should be transferred.’ Brymner saw the preservation of historical records as his job; the maintenance of post-Confederation records was the Secretary of State’s job.⁶²

In January 1888, Morgan was accused of ‘irregularities’ concerning what appeared to be duplicate salary payments, authorised by Morgan himself. As a result of the charges, Morgan was demoted from Chief Clerk to First Class Clerk, with a reduction in pay.⁶³ After his demotion, Morgan was succeeded by a Mr. Audet, who quite naturally assumed that the position of Keeper of the Records was both legitimate and, now, his. Under-Secretary of State Pope bemoaned the confusion:

Here then we have two officials, both claiming to be depositories of the Records of Canada, each ridiculing the pretensions of the other, and neither possessing any official status or warrant for his assumptions. Besides hampering and impeding one another, much of their work is duplicated. For example, Mr. Brymner possesses in his archives copies of a mass of documents, the originals of which are with Mr. Audet; these copies doubtless cost money which, inasmuch as the country already possessed the papers in original, might have been more profitably employed.

The situation was in fact even more complex. According to Pope, ‘the Clerk of the Privy Council for some years past has chosen to assume the style of “Custodian of State Papers” and vigorously claims to unite in his own person the functions of Archivist and Keeper of the Records.’⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ The papers concerning the charge against Morgan, and his battle for redress, are found in the Secretary of State Records, vol. 128, file 1130/07. See also Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, (1888), p. 92.

⁶⁴ Pope to Scott, 7 January 1897, p. 4.

Agitation for a Public Record Office

The public was not fully cognizant of the internal intrigues over the care of government records, but many people were certainly not satisfied with the archival work done to date. Both opportunities and records had been lost. The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec criticised the lack of a public record office, complaining that in its absence 'irreparable losses have been suffered.' In 1879 the Society issued another memorial to the government, this time 'respectfully suggesting that the archives of Canada should be gathered together into one Public Record Office, under the supervision and control of a competent Archivist.'⁶⁵ The *Toronto Globe* offered its own editorial insight into the confusion, arguing that the departmental record room 'has nothing whatever' to do with historical records:

The historical records include everything which are not purely Departmental papers ... the number of books defaced, lost, and even stolen from the Parliamentary library at Ottawa is a matter of notoriety. The Librarians are helpless to remedy it for they are powerless. The national archives must be placed beyond the clutch of be he who he may.⁶⁶

Unlike the public, many politicians were aware of the lack of cohesion in, and indeed the lack of any definition of, the government's archival work. The fact that four agencies -- the Department of Agriculture, the Secretary of State, the Library of Parliament, and the Privy Council -- all laid claim to the care of some form of historical record was seen as 'ridiculous' by men such as the Hon. Mr. Blake. He argued that the confusion arose 'from our not having determined the limits of the Archivist's work.'⁶⁷ The Hon. Mr. Casey agreed with Blake. In 1882 he scoffed, 'I notice that the Archivist is paid a salary of \$1,600 a year, but it has never been made very clear what he does for that sum.'⁶⁸ In 1885 he complained again that 'we have this annual vote for our Archives.

⁶⁵ LeMoine, 'The Archives of Canada,' p. 5.

⁶⁶ Editorial, *Toronto Globe*, 8 September 1885, quoted in Archer, 'A Study of Archival Institutions,' p. 69.

⁶⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1881), p. 136.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 786.

We have no statement that I know of as to the nature of the documents copied from year to year.’⁶⁹

In spite of Brymner’s emphasis on the historical orientation of his mandate, he indicated on more than one occasion that his work was not based on specific instructions or existing practice. ‘I have said that I was turned loose into three empty rooms Being entirely alone, I had full scope to adopt any system I chose.’⁷⁰ He acknowledged that the result was ‘a widespread misapprehension of the extent and scope of the work.’ But Brymner was not wholly innocent in the matter. He chose not to make the archives public until the records in hand were organised to his satisfaction. In 1882 he admitted that ‘for about ten years I was silently preparing the documents, deliberately and systematically, keeping silent on the subject, and it was not till they were in a state to admit of publicity that the existence of the branch became known.’⁷¹

In his own mind, Brymner did have a clear vision of his role. The archivist, he claimed, ‘collects the documents from which history is to be written the rough material to be formed into structures of exquisite beauty in the hands of the skilful workman.’ He was ‘the pioneer, whose duty is to clear away obstructions; the cultivated fields will follow.’ Archival records formed the essence of ‘a great storehouse of the history of the colonies and colonists in their political, ecclesiastical, industrial, domestic, in a word in every aspect of their lives as communities.’⁷² Brymner had a strongly pre-Confederation focus, and he saw a clear distinction between those early records, with historical value, and more recent post-Confederation records, some of which might still be used for administration.

Brymner did examine the work of other archival institutions. He travelled to Europe in 1881 to investigate ‘the means taken to collect, arrange, preserve, and render [archival records] accessible to the public.’ His investigations included examination of

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 1024.

⁷⁰ Canada, Archives, *Report on Canadian Archives, 1889* (1890), p. xii.

⁷¹ Douglas Brymner to Mr. Marmette, 24 May 1893, Douglas Brymner Papers, MG 29, D 25, NAC, vol. 1.

⁷² Canada, Archives, *Report on Canadian Archives, 1889* (1890), pp. x, xv.

state paper offices and government records repositories in several countries, including England, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. In his travels, Brymner would have been exposed to European archival practices that naturally focused on the management of the vast quantities of existing public records: records held in archives, in departments, and in registry offices; original records dating back centuries. He certainly would not have seen in Europe an emphasis on copying, for example. But there is no evidence that Brymner returned to Canada advocating the adoption of European record keeping systems. Indeed, his research left him encouraged by ‘how great an opportunity exists at this early stage of our history to profit by the mistakes of older nations.’⁷³

How Brymner intended to profit from these mistakes was unclear. By 1883 there was still no sense within government of the best system for the management of archival records. One suggestion was to amalgamate the archives and the Library of Parliament, but in 1883 Pope spoke against amalgamation, arguing that records ‘are more for the historian than they are books of reference for gentlemen attending Parliament.’⁷⁴ In 1884 Sir John A. Macdonald suggested following the English precedent of maintaining public records separately from private records and books. He explained that in England the archives were under the care of the Master of the Rolls, quite separate from the library of the British Museum.⁷⁵

An English-style public record office was soon the preferred option. In 1894, Brymner again travelled abroad to study European archives, ‘in preparation for suggesting a plan for a proper Record Office in Canada.’ He devised a list of questions concerning the care and custody of public records, including queries about the method of managing records both before and after their transfer to archival care.⁷⁶ He contacted archival repositories in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Hague, ‘the last being, I learn, worth study and investigation.’ No details exist of Brymner’s visit to the Netherlands, but it is likely from his comment that he made an effort to spend some time with

⁷³ Canada, Archives, *Report, 1881* (1882), p. 1.

⁷⁴ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1881), p. 137 and (1883), p. 836.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* (1884), p. 1010.

⁷⁶ Brymner to C. Tupper, 10 July 1894, Brymner Papers, vol. 1.

representatives of the newly formed Dutch Association of Archivists. This association, established in 1891, would in a few years commission the publication of Muller, Feith, and Fruin's *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, the first modern work on archival principles.⁷⁷

Meeting with the Dutch, Brymner would likely have heard of the emerging principles of provenance and original order, the idea that archival records existed as an organic whole, to be retained together and not separated or reorganised by artificial concepts such as subject or date. He also would have encountered the Dutch definition of archives, later published in the manual, which argued archives to be:

the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official.⁷⁸

According to this definition, in order for records to be archival, they must have remained, or have been intended to remain, in the official custody of the administrative body responsible for their creation. A public record office or government archival repository would care for the records of its government, not for copies of records, not for private records, and not for the records of other governments.

Such a definition denied the very essence of the Canadian concept of archival records. To Canadians such as Brymner, archival records were historical resource materials, acquired from whatever source, and preserved in an archival repository for their research value, not for any administrative use. If Brymner were to adopt the European perspective, his government would have less than thirty years worth of archival records, and those would be in the care of the Secretary of State. According to Brymner, the Secretary of State's job was to manage post-Confederation records for departmental purposes. Brymner was to seek out and preserve the historical record. Therein lay the

⁷⁷ Ibid. The Dutch work was published in 1898 in Dutch and translated into German (1905), Italian (1908), and French (1910). An English translation of the second edition was not published until 1940: S. Muller Fz, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin Th.Az, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives Drawn up by the Direction of the Netherlands Association of Archivists: Translation of the Second Edition by Arthur H. Leavitt* (New York, NY: H.W. Wilson Co., 1940).

⁷⁸ Muller, Feith and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, p. 13.

distinction between Brymner's vision of the nature of archival records and that of the Dutch and other European repositories.

There exists no report of his trip, no note or memorandum, that suggests that Brymner seriously considered the European perspective as valid in Canada. The fact that he seems not to have documented his European findings suggests either that he did not encounter the people who would have raised such issues, which is unlikely, or that he saw the Canadian situation as sufficiently different that the European definitions were not relevant.⁷⁹

The care of public records received serious study in 1897, after a fire threatened records in the West Block of the government buildings.⁸⁰ A Commission to Inquire into the State of the Public Records was appointed to consider 'how and where they are kept and their safety in case of fire; what papers or records might be destroyed and after what interval of time.' In its report, the Commission was critical of the state of government record keeping, complaining of 'the lack of any community of plan among the several departments for the arrangement and preservation of their records.' The Commission determined that Brymner had insufficient support for his work and even made specific mention of the antagonism between the archivist and the Keeper of the Records.⁸¹

In addition to the Commission's official report, Under-Secretary of State Joseph Pope wrote his confidential report to the Secretary of State R.W. Scott, outlining the Brymner-Morgan saga. Pope regretted that, while Brymner had amassed a large collection of valuable documents over twenty-five years, 'little progress' toward the care of government records had been made, owing largely to 'the limitations of Mr. Brymner's

⁷⁹ In his article on early American archival activities, William Birdsall argues that the influence of the Dutch manual in the United States was 'very limited,' even after its translation into English in 1940. See W. Birdsall, 'Archivists, Librarians, and Issues during the Pioneering Era of the American Archival Movement,' *Journal of Library History* 14, 4 (Fall 1979): esp. 469.

⁸⁰ While no records were destroyed, there was extensive water damage. See Archer, 'A Study of Archival Institutions,' esp. pp. 77-80.

⁸¹ Canada, Public Records Commission, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of the Public Records*. (Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer, 1898), pp. 6, 7.

position, the want of official countenance and support, and departmental rivalries and jealousies.’⁸²

Pope sought a practical, workable solution to the care of the records. ‘The paramount idea in my mind,’ he stated, ‘is that they should be in one safe place and under one control.’ One central archival repository should be established, responsible for all existing archival collections. The Secretary of State would be designated Keeper of the Records, and a Deputy Keeper of the Records would be appointed to manage the actual files. The whole would be placed in a fireproof building, which would house ‘not merely the ancient records but all departmental records over a certain age, which might be fixed at thirty years.’⁸³

In its recommendations, the Commission called for the construction of a fireproof record office, accessible to ‘students and other accredited persons, under rules to be laid down similar to those of the Public Record Office in England.’ But contrary to the principles of the Public Record Office, or the practices of European archives, the Commission specifically recommended that ‘power should be given to communicate with persons outside the public service for the purpose of obtaining material for the building up and maintaining the continuity of the Archives of Canada.’⁸⁴

The institution to be established might be called a public record office, but its mandate was to be much wider. Not just responsible for the management of government files, this repository was to be specifically charged with the continued acquisition of other materials, especially the records of predecessor governments and the private papers of government officials. The amalgamation would ensure the care of public records, it would encourage the preservation of historical materials, and it would eliminate the confusion caused by the existence of several conflicting archival programmes.

There was one obstacle to this plan. It was going to be politically irksome to decide ‘between the respective claims of the present Archivist and the Keeper of

⁸² Pope to Scott, 7 January 1897, pp. 1-2, 6.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Canada, Public Records Commission, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of the Public Records*, pp. 11-12.

Records.’ Pope again sought a pragmatic solution, recommending that no change in authority be made until Brymner’s retirement. ‘The advancing years ... of Mr. Brymner,’ he surmised, ‘will no doubt lead to the retirement of that gentleman before long and thus afford an opportunity for the reorganization of this important branch of the public service.’⁸⁵

Pope’s confidential report was issued in 1897, and by 1902 Brymner had not yet retired. Some politicians, unaware of Pope’s recommendations, continued to criticise the administration of the archives. In 1902, the Hon. Mr. Henderson questioned Brymner’s job. ‘Is it the purpose,’ he asked, ‘to continue this work from year to year in order to give persons employment and to spend a little more of the money of the tax-payers of this country?’⁸⁶ In 1903 the Hon. Mr. Sproule argued, ‘I do not see why parliament should vote money for keeping a work of that kind going on which will practically go on for ever, because when you start a work of that kind it rarely stops.’⁸⁷

Ultimately, it was not Brymner’s retirement, but his death, that allowed the government to change the administration of the archives. Brymner died in 1903, having served twenty-one years with the Department of Agriculture. In 1904, the Hon. Mr. Fowler went before the House of Commons to lay the groundwork for a new direction for the archives. He proclaimed that ‘all these documents ought to be collected in one place, classified and catalogued, and put in charge of some one person who would be responsible for their safekeeping.’ Fowler considered the death of Dr. Brymner as ‘a suitable occasion’ to make this change.⁸⁸

Brymner’s successor, the man the government felt would ensure, finally, that the records of the government were preserved and protected, was to be Arthur Doughty, historian and scholar. But ever sensitive to personalities, Pope wrote a memorandum in June 1904 suggesting that ‘I do not think Mr. Doughty should be gazetted “Keeper of the

⁸⁵ Pope to Scott, p. 7.

⁸⁶ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1902), p. 326.

⁸⁷ Ibid. (1903), p. 13506.

⁸⁸ Ibid. (1904), p. 2728.

Records” until after the 1st July 1904 when Mr. Audet retires.’⁸⁹ As it happened, Doughty received his official appointment on 16 May 1904.⁹⁰ Emphasising the combined responsibility for both public and private records care, Doughty’s title was to be ‘Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records.’ His task: ‘to keep and preserve the archives of Canada and such other documents, records and data as may tend to promote a knowledge of the history of Canada and furnish a record of events of historical interest therein.’⁹¹

Conclusion

From the early 1800s to 1904, Canadian governments struggled to clarify their responsibility for the preservation of archival records. Interest in the preservation of public records grew as scientific methods of research emphasised the use of original records. Historical societies, literary groups, and scientific associations were active in the collection of personal memorabilia and reminiscences, but they argued that it was the government’s responsibility to preserve the public record.

Unlike Europe and England, Canada did not have a legacy of archival records in government offices awaiting preservation. Canada’s government had arisen out of an inconstant political past; the records of its history were not to be found in centralised storage rooms. They were housed in archives, departmental offices, or private homes from Montreal to Paris, from Ottawa to London. To preserve historical information, it was necessary to seek out records. The archivist’s first job was to collect and disseminate the documentary heritage, regardless of its physical location. A distinction was made between public and private records, but a more important distinction was that between older, hard-to-find records and more modern, centrally managed files. Current records were not the responsibility of the archivist; his mandate was to seek out the stuff of

⁸⁹ Pope, Memorandum, 17 June 1904, Secretary of State Records, vol. 114, file 1558.

⁹⁰ See Wilson, ‘“A Noble Dream”’: 24.

⁹¹ Canada, Order in Council, PC 2018, 30 November 1903, quoted in Archer, ‘A Study of Archival Institutions,’ p. 86.

history. When the originals could not be had, reproduction was a necessary and acceptable means of obtaining and preserving essential historical information.

Although both the colonial government of Nova Scotia and the federal government of Canada appointed men to acquire and preserve historical records, neither government outlined clearly the boundaries of the task. Vague mandates, coupled with territorial clashes, left Canada's first archivists responsible for defining, and defending, their own work. The resulting perception of the role of the archivist and the nature of archival work was based on an appreciation of the historical and research value of records. Their administrative use to the government was not an archival issue. The idea that copies of records were somehow less valuable than originals was not considered. These were European ideas. While Brymner did travel abroad to study the European situation, he did not advocate the principle of unbroken custody, a philosophy increasingly important to the management of public records in Europe. Archival records were historical records, and the role of the archivist was to collect those records, wherever they might be.

As far as the historical community was concerned, the government could not move fast enough to secure the government record. Both the Nova Scotia and federal governments were criticised for the impermanent nature of their archival programmes. Historians in particular wanted public records managed in a more efficient and accessible fashion. Management of the record was a public responsibility, but the need to access the record reached well beyond the confines of government. Valid, well-researched histories could not be written if records were not secure; nor could they be written if records were not accessible.

Agitation grew over the need to establish a public record office, to house the historical records of the government. But by the time the federal government determined to establish such a repository, there were already several archival collections in existence in various government departments. Expediency, rather than philosophy, prompted the government to create one public record office and make it responsible for all historical records, public and private. Amalgamation would end the confusion and the conflict.

Sensitive to Brymner's long tenure with the Department of Agriculture, the government waited until after his death in 1903 to restructure the archives into a unified repository. It selected Arthur Doughty to serve as the new archivist and keeper of the public records. Doughty, a journalist and historian, was to establish a proper public records office in the English tradition. As well, he was charged with acquiring any other records required 'to promote a knowledge of the history of Canada.'

In this new administration, both the government's records and the historical resources would be well served. However, in its plans the government did not take into consideration one irrefutable reality: the intensity and single-mindedness of Arthur Doughty, *collector extraordinaire*.

DEMON OF PERSISTENCE:

ARTHUR DOUGHTY AND ARCHIVAL POLICY, 1904-1949

When Dr. Doughty decided that anything should belong to the archives the best plan was to hand it over at once.

Winnipeg Free Press, 20 March 1935

Introduction

Arthur Doughty was appointed Dominion Archivist and Keeper of the Records in May 1904. He presided over the newly named Dominion Archives, which became the Public Archives of Canada in 1912, until his death in 1937. Doughty's effect on the cultural orientation of Canadian archival repositories cannot be underestimated. The term 'total archives' was not coined until more than three decades after Doughty's death, but his passion for collecting contributed to the widespread acceptance of private records acquisition by publicly funded archival institutions.

Doughty was a collector. His primary archival interest was in the acquisition of historical materials, be they records (preferably originals), books, maps, portraits, or artifacts, from as many sources as possible. In the absence of other repositories, such as a national museum or national library, Doughty saw the national archives as the centre of Canadian history, and national acquisition as its *raison d'être*.

The student of a period or episode in Canadian history has many advantages. The materials he requires for his work are all contained in one building. If he were to pursue a similar study in England he would be compelled to visit several widely separated institutions. For original manuscripts he would consult the Public Record Office; for maps, old newspapers or pamphlets and private papers he would visit the British Museum; and for illustrative purposes he would go to the national portrait

gallery and to various museums where sketches are deposited. The Canadian Archives combines in itself the features of all these institutions; and gratified students have declared that the history of Canada can be written from the material which is contained in this building.¹

Doughty's vision, and his consequent actions, proved so persuasive that the few other archivists active in Canada followed his lead. Many pursued their own private records acquisition programmes, sometimes ending in conflict with other interested parties or, indeed, with each other.

The public record office envisioned by the federal government in the nineteenth century never came to full fruition during Doughty's reign. Rather, the acquisition orientation of the national repository was intensified. Archivists, historians, and politicians soon came to accept the leading role of government in the care of non-government records. While many argued for better management of the public record, they agreed that its care should not be at the expense of the private record.

Criticism of Doughty's actual policies and practices, muted during his lifetime, did surface after his death, although his legacy was sustained through the difficult years of economic depression and world war. It was not until after the Second World War, in the light of changing communications technologies and the plethora of paper, that historians and government seriously reconsidered the priorities of archival work, both nationally and provincially. By then, in spite of records management imperatives, the urge to promote Canadian nationalism would encourage, rather than discourage, an inclusive vision of archival responsibilities, one that explicitly sanctioned the acquisition of private records by public agencies.

Doughty's Archival Work: Patriotism, Scholarship, and Centralisation

At the beginning of the twentieth century, historians perceived historical study as critical to the development of a scholarly and civilised Canadian society. As one historian emphasised, a 'thorough presentation of the facts' would assist 'the development of a sane and solid patriotism which will give at once unity and inspiration to the people of

¹ A. Doughty, *The Canadian Archives and its Activities* (Ottawa, ON: F. A. Acland, 1924), p. 7.

Canada.’² Another claimed that history would create a positive public sentiment, moulding ‘the patriotic character of our entire citizenship.’³

There was an urgent desire to strengthen national sentiment, for the new country was suffering a growing schism between its two founding cultures, English and French. Also, the regions of Canada, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, did not necessarily perceive themselves as unified, with each other or with the national capital. As Francis H. Carmen wrote, ‘we created a Dominion first and left the growth of a national sentiment to follow.’⁴ The search for nationalism was instrumental in the formation in 1907 of the Historical Landmarks Association of Canada, with the motto ‘Memory Inspires.’ The association was created to serve as an ‘Intelligence Department for all Societies and individuals interested in preserving the great souvenirs of our country’s history.’ Its members urged that ‘Canada does need the exalting touch of every landmark that bears a living message, and that she can keep either in substance or in souvenir; lest, seeking the whole mere world of riches, she lose her own soul.’⁵

It was in this environment of scholarship and patriotism that Doughty took up his appointment. Born in England in 1860, Arthur Doughty came to Canada at the age of twenty-six, working in Quebec first as a journalist for the *Montreal Gazette* and then as a provincial civil servant.⁶ By 1901 he had completed his six-volume study of *The Siege of Quebec and Battle of the Plains of Abraham*; he had by 1908 also authored or co-authored numerous other scholarly works, including *The King’s Book of Quebec* and *Quebec under Two Flags*.⁷ His reputation for research into Canadian history, particularly the history of

² Quoted in I. Wilson, ‘Shortt and Doughty: The Cultural Role of the Public Archives of Canada, 1904-1935’ (M.A. thesis, Queen’s University, 1973), pp. 18, 21.

³ Chancellor Burwash, Victoria University, quoted in Ontario, Archives, *Report on Ontario Archives* (Toronto, ON: King’s Printer, 1903), p. 35.

⁴ F.H. Carmen, ‘Our Archives and the National Spirit,’ *The Canadian Magazine* (February 1913): 307-9, quoted in Wilson, ‘Shortt and Doughty,’ p. 79.

⁵ Historic Landmarks Association of Canada, *The Historic Landmarks Association* (Ottawa, ON: Historic Landmarks Association, 1907).

⁶ Doughty’s appointment is discussed in I. Wilson, ‘“A Noble Dream”: The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada,’ *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 24.

⁷ A biography of Doughty was published in 1937, as an offprint of an article in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*. Arthur George Doughty (no place: no publisher, 1937). A copy is available in Arthur Doughty, Papers, MG 30, D 26, NAC, vol. 10.

Quebec, was widespread. His scholarly proclivities led him into archival work, and into the minds of those seeking the ideal candidate for the position of Dominion Archivist.

Doughty's experience was as drama critic, journalist, librarian, and historian. He did not profess a great strength at administration, the development of archival systems, or the management of personnel. In his first years as Dominion Archivist, Doughty was aided by several historian colleagues; in 1907 the group was formalised as an Historical Manuscripts Commission. Its task was to assist with 'collecting, arranging and rendering accessible ... original sources.'⁸ Members included the historians Adam Shortt, George Wrong, J. Edmond Roy, C.W. Colby, and Abbé Gosselin, as well as Doughty and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Agriculture.⁹ The Commission held regular meetings between 1907 and 1915, and one of its major duties was the editing and publication of a series of historical documents, in the series *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791*. The Commission also worked more informally with Adam Shortt on his twenty-three-volume series *Canada and Its Provinces*, published by Robert Glasgow and modelled after the English *Cambridge Modern History* series.¹⁰

As an archivist, Doughty's concern for factual and detailed history prompted him to acquire research materials on a vast scale, both originals and copies. He argued that 'each day that passes is a triumph for an archive, for each day some mere scrap of paper permits justice to prevail.'¹¹ His was not simply an administrative post; his work was 'noble and patriotic.'¹² Indeed, he had little inclination to manage those government records available in Ottawa; his preference was for the detective work of seeking dispersed materials. While he acknowledged in principle that it was not 'the legitimate

⁸ Canada, Privy Council, 'Report of the Committee of the Privy Council,' 17 April 1907, National Archives of Canada Records, RG 37 (hereafter NAC records), National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), vol. 303, File: PAC History, part 2. See also Wilson, '“A Noble Dream”': 27.

⁹ See J.H. Archer, 'A Study of Archival Institutions in Canada' (Ph.D dissertation, Queen's University, 1969), p. 92.

¹⁰ This is discussed in Wilson, '“A Noble Dream”': 28.

¹¹ Doughty, *The Canadian Archives and its Activities*, p. 5-6.

¹² Canada, Archives, *Report concerning Canadian Archives for the year 1905 in three volumes* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1906), p. xiv. (Hereafter cited as Canada, Archives, *Report*, and year of publication.)

business' of an archivist to seek out and arrange material for historians, he argued that the Canadian archivist 'must perform this task for some years to come.'¹³

In Brussels in 1910, archivists attending the first meeting of the International Congress on Archives endorsed the principles of provenance and original order outlined by the Dutch archivists Muller, Feith, and Fruin in 1898. Doughty's Historical Manuscripts Commission validated these principles, stating that 'documents which come from the various departments or departmental offices must be kept by themselves in the order in which they were received.'¹⁴ But Doughty felt these ideas must be interpreted liberally. The records of Canada's history had been moved from capital to capital, had suffered fire, flood, war, and other hazards, and had ended their days in storage containers in the attics of former colonial officials. As a result, Doughty saw little chance to apply the principle of provenance rigidly. 'It is immaterial to the enquirer,' he argued, 'whether a letter of a Governor has been found in a particular collection in Europe, or in Canada.'¹⁵

Doughty considered the national archives to be the only logical repository for records relating to Canada. 'It is the aim of the Department,' he claimed, 'to collect and preserve everything that will throw light upon the history of the whole Dominion.'¹⁶ He asserted that 'the time would come when people would realize that the removal of all these matters to a central depository would do more for the province, even if proper care were taken of them within the province.'¹⁷

Initially there was little objection to this centralist vision. Historians and other archivists praised Doughty for his widespread collecting. One historian commended Doughty for 'casting a wide net.'¹⁸ Another noted that Doughty's 'abilities as a collector have been remarkable, and his career will, in a great many ways, constitute a unique

¹³ A. Doughty to H. Biggar, 30 May 1905, NAC Records, vol. 1, file 50-11-1.

¹⁴ Canada, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Minutes, 8 February 1910, quoted in Wilson, 'Shortt and Doughty,' p. 72.

¹⁵ Canada, Archives, *Report* (1905), p. ix.

¹⁶ Doughty, Letterbooks, 20 May 1920, vol. 7, pp. 415-16, quoted in Wilson, 'Shortt and Doughty,' p. 95.

¹⁷ Doughty, Letterbooks, 16 May 1917, vol. 18, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁸ 'Notes and Comments,' *Canadian Historical Review* 1, 3 (September 1920): 237-39.

contribution to the advancement of Canadian history.'¹⁹ British Columbia's archivist R. Gosnell agreed that 'some day, of course, the Dominion will undertake the collection of the archives of all the provinces.'²⁰ Another scholar boasted that, to the task of acquisition, 'Dr. Doughty has devoted an unbounded enthusiasm and an inscrutable technique, before which obstacles vanish as the snow in April.'²¹

Politicians were also pleased with Arthur Doughty. Scholarship and national identity were both served by the efforts of this scholar and public servant. He was considered 'a gentleman of such consummate competency,' according to one, that 'we should carry out all the suggestions which might come from him.'²² According to another, 'any government in the world would be glad to secure Dr. Doughty's services.' This politician recognised the strength of Doughty's will, saying that 'when a document does not exist he almost invents one.'²³

Inevitably then, Doughty's archival programme was extensive. While he continued Brymner's work of identifying and copying government records in England and France, he greatly expanded the acquisition of private-sector records, particularly original documents. In Doughty's first three years as archivist, the holdings of the Archives expanded from 3,157 volumes to 12,660 volumes. Included were such records as 35 volumes of copies of the records of Colonel Henry Bouquet, a Brigadier General with the British Army in the Seven Years War; and 247 volumes of the correspondence of Sir Frederick Haldimand, the Commander-in-Chief of Canada from 1778 to 1784. Doughty also acquired copies of the Elgin-Grey Papers, between Lord Elgin, a British politician, and Charles Grey, the second Earl Grey, Secretary for War and the Colonies from 1846 to 1852. He also obtained another 1782 volumes of military records and 292

¹⁹ 'The Retirement of Dr. Doughty,' in *ibid.*, 16, 2 (June 1935): 218.

²⁰ R.E. Gosnell to Doughty, 24 March 1908, NAC Records, vol. 61, file 65-5-10, vol. 1. For a history of the provincial archives in British Columbia, see T. Eastwood, 'R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield and the Founding of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1894-1919,' *B.C. Studies* 54 (Summer 1982): 38-62.

²¹ D. McArthur, 'Some Problems of Canadian Historical Scholarship,' *Canadian Historical Review* 8, 1 (1927): 4.

²² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1909), p. 691.

²³ *Ibid.* (1914), p. 1770.



volumes of French correspondence.²⁴ Doughty even established a Canadian History Society in England, and another in France, to encourage 'those in possession of private papers to place them at the disposal of the Nation.'²⁵

At this time there was no national library in Canada, and the only national museum, attached to the Geological Survey of Canada, was oriented toward natural history. A Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and National Gallery of Canada had been established in 1880 but was not particularly active until after its incorporation in 1913. Thus Doughty was certainly not overstepping the boundaries of other existing institutions.²⁶ Indeed, he was performing a service not available anywhere else in the public or private sector. No other agency was acquiring and preserving information about Canada's past. The Archives became the central repository for the country's memory, documentary or otherwise. During the First World War, for example, Doughty was given the task of collecting war trophies for the new War Museum, which he was to administer along with the archives. Doughty defined this task in his usual broad terms. Writing to officers to encourage donations, Doughty listed items of particular interest, including

anything in the shape of Helmets bayonets, belts, buttons, weapons of all kinds, pocket books, letters, posters, sketches, bombs, portions of biplanes, fuses or any objects picked up on the field.²⁷

Doughty did not even restrict the Archives to a repository; he turned it into a laboratory for historical scholarship. One of his innovations was the initiation of a summer school in historical research. As early as 1911 students were paid \$50 per month, for a minimum of three months, to undertake historical research in the Archives. University students in their third or fourth year of history were invited; one each from the English-language universities and two French students from Laval University.²⁸ By 1922

²⁴ 'The Canadian Archives,' *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* (1907): 47-48.

²⁵ A. Doughty, 'The Preservation of Historical Documents in Canada,' *ibid.* (1924): 70.

²⁶ See A.F. Key, *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1973). An Historic Sites and Monuments Board was formed in 1919 to advise the government on historic sites worthy of official recognition. See C.J. Taylor, 'Some Early Problems of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada,' *Canadian Historical Review* 64, 1 (1983): 3-24.

²⁷ Doughty to Colonel White, 12 August 1916, Doughty Papers, vol. 10.

²⁸ Doughty to S. Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, 18 April 1911, NAC Records, vol. 26, File: 60-3-Agric (vol. 5).

Queen's University had joined with the Archives to establish the 'Queen's University Summer School of Historical Research at the Canadian Archives, Ottawa.'²⁹

Doughty's Long Reach: The Example of the Maritime Provinces

Doughty could not manage such an immense mandate single-handedly. He engaged a number of assistants, both overseas and in Canada. In Europe, he retained three researchers, Messrs. Biggar, Tantet, and Garston. These men were not just to copy government records; they were responsible for seeking, examining, and purchasing both public and private historical materials, particularly those 'in the custody of families members of which have formerly held official positions in, or been connected with events in the history of, the Dominion of Canada.'³⁰

Doughty also employed several assistants in different parts of Canada. In 1915, James Mitchell, 'a gentleman of student inclinations,' was appointed the Archives' agent for Ontario. His job was to seek out pioneers and their records and compile historical information about the western region of the province.³¹ P.G. Roy and two copyists were to identify and copy archival records in Quebec City, and M.B. Delabruère and four copyists were to do the same in Montreal. Doughty's most active, and most provocative, assistant was W.C. Milner, who, with two clerks, was responsible for seeking out and obtaining, either in original or copy form, any or all records to do with the history of the Maritime provinces.³²

Upon his appointment, Milner established an office in Halifax and spent considerable time travelling the maritime provinces collecting historical materials for the Dominion Archives. Milner insinuated himself into the historical and literary society of the Maritimes; as well as working for Doughty, he was a member of the Nova Scotia

²⁹ See for example the course descriptions for 1931, 1933, and 1940, in James Kenney Papers, MG 30, C176, NAC, vol. 1, File: Queens.

³⁰ Doughty to Biggar, 11 June 1907, NAC Records, vol. 1, File: 50-11-1, vol. 3.

³¹ E.N. Lewis to Doughty, 24 March 1915, NAC Records, vol. 20, File: 50 PAC Ont.

³² See the 'Chart of Organization, Public Archives, Government of Canada,' July 1918, NAC Records, vol. 303, File: PAC Organization Chart.

Manuscripts Commission, an advocate for free libraries in the Maritimes, the author of many historical articles, and participant in local historical societies.³³

Doughty and Milner were of like mind about the purpose of the Dominion Archives. They both envisioned 'a national institution corresponding in historic material to the British Museum.'³⁴ Both argued that provincial governments should 'rigorously support' them in their efforts. They deplored the 'uselessness' of provincial attempts to duplicate federal work.³⁵ In the face of local opposition, they did concede that 'the Archives, not being a depository of relics or curiosities, does not require originals, and therefore it will not destroy or mutilate any documents entrusted to it, but return the originals on demand, keeping copies on its shelves for public use.'³⁶ This statement might have been for public consumption only, as Doughty was in fact actively collecting originals of everything, including a range of relics from coins, medals, and uniforms to weapons and furniture.

Doughty's vision, with Milner and others as executors, suffered from increasing opposition from the regions. In spite of Doughty's nationalist orientation, the sense of Canadianism longed for by Ottawa was not in fact well entrenched. The provinces saw themselves as separate and distinct, and there was growing concern that the central government was inappropriately removing their local heritage.

A conflict arose in 1916 between Milner and the Nova Scotia Historical Society about the ownership and management of a large series of admiralty records found in Halifax. Attempting to secure the records for the Dominion Archives, Milner agitated some local historians, in particular one Archdeacon Armitage, who was, it turned out, also a member of the Doughty's Historical Manuscripts Commission, having been appointed after the expansion of the Commission to fourteen members in 1912. On learning of Milner's attempts to acquire the admiralty records, Armitage condemned him as 'a terror.'

³³ See D. Macleod, 'Our Man in the Maritimes: "Down East" with the Public Archives of Canada, 1872-1932,' *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 86-95.

³⁴ Milner to O.T. Daniels, Attorney General, 26 September 1912, NAC Records, vol. 17, File: 50 PAC NS 1.

³⁵ Milner to Daniels, 30 May 1913, *ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Hearing of the accusation, Milner argued to Doughty that Armitage was not serving the best interests of either the Historical Manuscripts Commission or the Dominion Archives by interfering with efforts to transfer records to Ottawa. Milner said of Armitage that 'all I want of him is, as a member of the Manuscripts Commission, and so far as the public knows endorsed by the Archives -- to keep out of the way of my work.'³⁷

Doughty supported Milner in the dispute. He praised Milner's efforts, claiming that 'if we had more terrors we would have more papers.' He argued that:

The mysterious manner in which you have gathered papers has aroused a good deal of animosity, not because your opponents have any particular love or regard for the papers but simply because you have been able to do what they could not do The only time that I have been inclined to find fault with you was for not sending the things to Ottawa quicker. Because if you once get them out of reach of your opponents they would never get them back again without armed force.³⁸

Ultimately Milner was able to secure the records in question, but he called it 'a close shave.'³⁹ The local historical community reacted badly to the news. In a letter to the *Nova Scotia Mail*, 'Nova Scotia First' condemned the officers of the provincial historical society, who 'should hang their heads in shame for allowing these documents to be carried a thousand miles away from the place where they properly belong.'⁴⁰ Rising local historical sentiment threatened to cripple Doughty's vision of an all-embracing, Ottawa-based archival repository.

Milner and Doughty also faced opposition in their quest to acquire the records of the government of New Brunswick. Sometime before April 1920 Milner had acquired a series of New Brunswick lands records, which he was to index and abstract. The records were to be housed in the St. John office of the Dominion Archives until the indexing was complete. In April 1920 historian W.F. Ganong wrote to Milner that the anticipated completion of the indexing work 'raises the question as to their ultimate disposition.'⁴¹ The question was whether to leave them in St. John, return them to Fredericton, or send

³⁷ Milner to Doughty, 12 May 1917, NAC Records, vol. 18, File: N.S. 4.

³⁸ Doughty, Letterbooks, 16 May 1917, vol. 18, quoted in Wilson, 'Shortt and Doughty,' p. 146.

³⁹ Milner to Doughty, 21 May 1917, NAC Records, vol. 18, File: N.S. 4.

⁴⁰ Mail, 8 September 1916, Harry Piers Collection, MG 1, PANS, vol. 1051A.

⁴¹ Ganong to Milner, 5 April 1920, NAC, RG 37, vol. 303, File: PAC History, part 2.

them to Ottawa. Milner was critical of the plan to return them to Fredericton. He explained to Ganong that the archives had secured the records and spent \$12,000 preserving, copying, and indexing them. He argued that the Dominion Archives could provide a much better service than Fredericton could, as it would be able to conduct research and provide copies at no cost. He argued that 'for every document in local history that can be drawn from Provincial sources, a hundred can be furnished by the Archives at Ottawa.' He complained that

one of the great obstacles to my work in collecting is the insane desire of individuals to hold onto public documents or private documents of a public character for the purpose of exhibiting them as curios. It obstructs the work of a central bureau and defeats any attempt to make any local history complete.⁴²

Unlike their success in Nova Scotia, Doughty and Milner did not win this battle.⁴³

The growing sense of regionalism was not confined to the Maritimes. In Ontario, Alexander Fraser had been appointed archivist in 1903, holding one of the few provincial archival positions in the country. Fraser's mandate was broad; it included collecting provincial, municipal, school, and church records, copying provincial records held by the Dominion Archives, and 'rescuing from oblivion the memory of the pioneer settlers.'⁴⁴ Doughty was busy acquiring records from Ontario, and Fraser was forced to complain that 'the Dominion Archivist should devote himself to purely Dominion business.'⁴⁵ At one point Fraser was asked by Milner to support the Dominion Archives' efforts to remove records from the Maritimes, but Fraser declined to cooperate. He contended that:

The Province of Ontario is very much indeed out of pocket annually by the fact that papers and documents of an official capacity pertaining to our

⁴² Milner to Ganong, 8 November 1920, NAC Records, vol. 18, File: N.S. 5.

⁴³ Milner's scope was so wide that he even contemplated the acquisition of records of territories not within Canadian jurisdiction. In November 1912 he wrote to Doughty that 'you have no doubt considered Newfoundland. A couple of hard seasons would likely drive her into Union. Of course you want to be prepared for such a contingency. I have a plan to start collecting which in its initial stages will not cost anything.' In fact, Newfoundland did not become a province of Canada until 1949. Milner to Doughty, 12 November 1912, NAC Records, vol. 17, File: 50 PAC NS 1.

⁴⁴ 'Scope of the Provincial Archivist's Office,' Alexander Fraser Papers, MU 1066, Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), c. 1903.

⁴⁵ A. Fraser, 'Memorandum on Archives,' 11 October 1906, Archives of Ontario Records, RG 17, AO, series 16.

Province and we think properly belonging to it, are not in our custody You can therefore readily understand the ground of the objections which the Provinces entertain to surrendering papers which they believe properly and constitutionally belong to them.⁴⁶

Doughty's obsession with acquisition even prompted objections within his own institution. In 1920, Doughty's assistant David Parker, in charge of the manuscripts division of the Public Archives, wrote a memorandum to Doughty criticizing him for not managing the classification of records better. Parker told Doughty that, while 'unrivalled as a collector your interest in manuscripts seems to cease as soon as they are received.' He also complained that his efforts to organise and classify the records 'have been hampered and frustrated by you at every turn.'⁴⁷ Even historians researching at the archives cursed 'the utter lack' of any principles of organisation.⁴⁸

A Canadian Archival Policy

If Doughty's interest in manuscripts ceased as soon as they were received, his interest in government records ceased even before the records were identified. In his thirty years as Dominion Archivist Doughty seemed to have undertaken virtually no action on the management of government records. Almost no mention is made of government records work in Doughty's reports, and virtually no evidence can be found that suggests he initiated any programmes for the care of public records. This was ironic given the original intention, with Doughty's appointment, to transform the poorly defined and overlapping archival work of several departments into a functioning English-style public record office.

Doughty's emphasis on to acquisition, and his inattention to government records, did not go unnoticed by the federal government. In 1912, Doughty was appointed as one of three members of a royal commission investigating the state of public records. The Commission was established because the government argued that 'there is reason to

⁴⁶ Fraser to Milner, 28 August 1923, Archives of Ontario Records, s. 15.

⁴⁷ D. Parker, 'Memorandum to Dr. Doughty on the classification of the records of government departments (1760-1867) in the Manuscript Room,' NAC Records, vol. 303, File: PAC History, p. 6.

⁴⁸ A.L. Burt to Mrs. Burt, 21 June 1927, quoted in Wilson, ' "A Noble Dream" ', p. 32.

believe that historical material exists among departmental records.' The Commission came to essentially the same conclusions as had its predecessor in 1897: public records were not organised, and action was required to rescue the records 'from their present unsatisfactory condition.' Several recommendations were made. These included, yet again, the creation of a public record office, the transfer of all records more than twenty-five years old to the new record office, the enlargement of the archives' building, the safe storage of any records presently in physical danger, and the creation of a reference library for government publications.⁴⁹

In spite of the government's concern for public records, it did not question the archives' role in the acquisition of private records. The copying done by Brymner, and the acquisitions by Doughty, were valuable steps in the preservation of Canada's history. The government accepted its role in the process. With the passage of the Public Archives Act in 1912, the government explicitly sanctioned public responsibility for the acquisition of non-government records and the copying, printing, and publication of historical materials. It also confirmed a definition of archival records that emphasised their historical significance over their institutional importance.

Two key clauses defined the broad scope of the activities of the new Public Archives. The first confirmed that the repository had a duty to preserve not only public records but also any other historical materials:

The Public Archives shall consist of all such public records, documents and other historical material of every kind, nature and description as, under this act, or under the authority of any order in council made by virtue

⁴⁹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the State of the Records of the Public Departments of the Dominion of Canada* (Ottawa, ON: King's Printer, 1914). In 1926 the government authorised the establishment of another Public Records Commission, chaired by Doughty, to report to the government on issues relating to public records, particularly those 'which related to an increased usefulness of the department to all parts of the Dominion.' As Chairman, Doughty was to receive \$3,000 per annum. However, according to a 1943 government memo, 'the Commission was never set up, never met, and ... no reports to government were made.' It was suggested in the memorandum that the Commission may have existed in part as a means to provide Doughty a salary; it clearly did not guide his public records work. W.E.D. Halliday, 'The Public Records Commission,' 17 February 1943, Canada, Public Records Committee Records, RG 35/7, NAC, vol. 4.

thereof, are placed under the care, custody and control of the Dominion Archivist.⁵⁰

Thus, items taken into custody by the Dominion Archivist were, by virtue of their acquisition, considered part of the archives. Their medium, form, or origins were inconsequential. By this definition, the government had the right to acquire documents, art, publications, artifacts, and other materials, all of which would form part of the Dominion Archives.⁵¹

The second key clause clarified the authority of the Dominion Archivist to acquire records outside of the government sphere. He was given a free hand in the selection of materials:

The Dominion Archivist, under the direction of the Minister, may acquire for the Public Archives all such original records, documents and other material as he deems necessary or desirable to secure therefor[e], or he may acquire copies thereof, and all such originals or copies so acquired shall form part of the Public Archives.⁵²

Again, materials were defined as archival by virtue of their acquisition, not by their form or medium or by the nature or method of their creation. Records from non-government agencies were equally as archival as public records; copies were equally as archival as originals. For example, the historian Adam Shortt, editor of a wide range of historical documents, confirmed that 'as sources of historical information, accurate copies are quite as valuable as original documents, and commonly much more legible.'⁵³ The idea that copying would ensure the preservation of the information, and that the information was

⁵⁰ Canada, *An Act Respecting the Public Archives*, 1912. Shortly after the passage of the Act, the Privy Council transferred responsibility for the archives and the commission from the Minister of Agriculture to the Department of Secretary of State. See Canada, Privy Council, 'Report of the Committee of the Privy Council,' 6 June 1912, NAC Records, vol. 303, File: PAC History, part 2.

⁵¹ D. Parker, in the introduction to his 1913 *Guide to the Materials for United States History in Canadian Archives*, commented on the evolution of the Canadian national archives, stating that 'The Dominion Archivist [Brymner] had no archives, in the strict sense of that term, to administer.' D. Parker, *Guide to the Materials for United States History in Canadian Archives* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1913), p. 3.

⁵² Canada. *An Act Respecting the Public Archives*.

⁵³ Ontario, Archives, *Report* (1903), p. 34. Two years after Shortt made this statement, the Library of Congress in the United States instituted its own programme to copy records in foreign repositories, particularly in Great Britain, France, Germany, and Spain, relating to American history. This is mentioned in W.K. Lamb, 'Liberalization of Restrictions on Access to Archives: General Survey,' International Council on Archives, Extraordinary Congress, 9-13 May 1966, NAC Records, CD 25 I5 E9 1966, volume 1, File: ICA Congress/Lamb.

equally as valuable as the original record, was still strong in archivists' and historians' minds.

The definition of archives embodied in the Public Archives Act bore little relationship to the theory of archival management evolving in England and Europe. In 1922, ten years after passage of the Public Archives Act in Canada, Clarendon Press in England published Hilary Jenkinson's textbook on archives, *A Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making*. Jenkinson's text provided the first concrete statement of archival theory widely available to English-language archivists. His discussion 'What are Archives?' defined archival repositories in a manner quite distinct from Canadian practice:

A document which may be said to belong to the class of Archives is one which was drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which itself formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and their legitimate successors archives were not drawn up on the interest or for the information of Posterity.⁵⁴

Jenkinson wrote from the perspective of the Public Record Office, which had a clear mandate to manage the vast quantities of extant records of the government of the United Kingdom. In England, university libraries, the British Museum, and other institutions had long existed, actively acquiring private records. Jenkinson did not reject the legitimacy of acquiring historical materials, and he did not question the validity of acquisition-oriented institutions. He simply argued that archival records were the natural product of actions and transactions, and to retain their integrity they must be retained as an organic whole, with the history of their custody and management clearly identified. Unlike publications or artifacts, archival records were not to be managed as items, nor were they to be grouped into artificial collections.

Jenkinson emphasised the difference between the archivist and the historian, arguing that the archivist must not make acquisition decisions based on personal

⁵⁴ H. Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1922): p. 11.

judgments or modern research interests. The archivist's duty was to preserve the records, as impartial evidence of the past, without judgment or prejudice. He opposed involving the archivist in appraisal decisions, arguing instead that the administrator should be the 'sole agent for the selection and destruction of his own documents.'⁵⁵

Jenkinson's definition of archives would have been an anathema to Doughty. However, there is no hard evidence that Doughty considered this theory. Having travelled to England a number of times, he would probably have met a prominent archival figure such as Jenkinson at some point. And he would have had access to the American journals reviewing the book. But it does not seem that Doughty considered these new theories applicable to his own situation; he certainly seems not to have written or spoken of them publicly, even to refute them. There is evidence that in 1937, James Kenney, Acting Dominion Archivist after Doughty's retirement, wrote to England to order two copies of the second edition of Jenkinson's book, after he discovered that the first edition was no longer available for sale. This suggests that there was no copy of the first edition in the Public Archives.⁵⁶ Whether by ignorance or by choice, Doughty did not avail himself of the ideas of his English colleague. Instead, Doughty preferred the company of his associates in Canadian history.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 128-30. Jenkinson's views were not embraced wholeheartedly by North American archivists. Several Americans who reviewed the *Manual* questioned Jenkinson's rigid definition of archives. Theodore Pease asked 'where among these sources do archives leave off and historical manuscripts begin?' Randolph G. Adams argued that 'archives which are not in official custody are archives none the less.' Curtis Garrison summarised the practical American view: 'Americans are never going to be ruled by bureaucratic definitions, and if a state archivist sees a good manuscript collection disintegrating, or in danger, I hope he will rescue it.' It was at this time that the terms 'papers' and 'manuscripts' began appearing in North American archival discussion, to distinguish private records from public records. See T.C. Pease, 'Review, *A Manual of Archive Administration*,' *The American Archivist* 1, 1 (January 1938): 25; R.G. Adams, 'The Character and Extent of Fugitive Archival Material,' *The American Archivist* 2, 2 (April 1939): 87; and C.W. Garrison, 'The Relation of Historical Manuscripts to Archival Materials,' *ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵⁶ Kenney to Biggar, 24 February 1937, NAC Records, vol. 7, File: 21.

A Sense of History

Canadian historians were increasingly influential in the management of Canadian archives. Their vision of historical study as essential to the preservation of a national identity was one shared by many, including politicians at the highest level. In 1921, the Prime Minister himself, Sir Robert Borden, spoke in favour of the preservation of archival records:

Crops and manufactures do not make up the whole life of a nation. The development of the intellectual and spiritual qualities of the nation, of the moral qualities of the people, is surely not of less importance. A nation which neglects these higher considerations cannot hold its place in the world. The preservation of our records has a direct relation to such considerations.⁵⁷

The historian Duncan McArthur, who worked with Doughty, also expressed his belief that one of the main purposes of studying and teaching history was ‘the creation and development of an intelligent and enlightened Canadian citizenship.’⁵⁸

After the First World War a professional historical community began to emerge. With it, historical research grew ever more sophisticated. More university education programmes were established, more specific fields of study identified, and more archival records identified and preserved. McArthur noted that ‘the volume of original documentary source-materials has become so great as to baffle completely the industry and the ability of the single workman.’⁵⁹ He also expressed concern about the ‘unnecessary duplication’ of research,⁶⁰ noting that ‘all subjects are not of equal significance.’⁶¹ Historian W.S. Wallace was also critical of the lack of discrimination in selecting research topics:

It is well to add something to the sum of human knowledge; but this does not mean that one should drag from oblivion solid phalanxes of meaningless and unimportant facts nothing damns a book so quickly as

⁵⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1921), p. 2949.

⁵⁸ D. McArthur, ‘The Teaching of Canadian History,’ *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* 31 (1924): 206.

⁵⁹ D. McArthur, ‘The Canadian Archives and the Writing of Canadian History,’ *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1934): 14.

⁶⁰ D. McArthur, ‘Some Problems of Canadian Historical Scholarship,’ *Canadian Historical Review* 8, 1 (March 1927): 5.

⁶¹ McArthur, ‘The Canadian Archives and the Writing of Canadian History,’ 15.

excessive and indiscriminate annotation and citation of authorities: one might as well bring the kitchen utensils into the dining room.⁶²

One sign of the growing professionalism of historians was the restructuring of the nationalistic Historical Landmarks Association in 1922 into a professionally oriented Canadian Historical Association, responsible 'for the promotion of everything connected with the history of the Dominion.'⁶³ The historian was part of a new professional class. For historians, a university post was now the norm, not the exception; the academic study of history was an accepted and legitimate pursuit. Archival repositories, and archivists, were an integral part of historical study, and 'important historical research is done by members of the staffs of a number of archives and libraries.'⁶⁴ Archival records, and archival institutions, were increasingly important tools of the scholar's craft. Historians, increasingly political as well as professional, took steps to ensure the national archives was doing its job.

Planning for Archival Management

By 1928, Doughty had been at the Public Archives for twenty-four years, and he was nearing seventy years of age. In anticipation of Doughty's retirement, a group of scholars met to consider 'a reasoned policy of development at the Archives.' They were anxious to release Doughty from his administrative duties in order to allow him to focus his remaining energies on 'a grand piece of collecting.' In his place they would appoint another archivist as 'understudy to take charge of the daily organization of the Institution.'⁶⁵ This plan does not seem to have been put into action.

As it had been with Douglas Brymner, the government was reluctant to impose retirement on Doughty. In 1932, the Hon. Mr. Cahan spoke of the administration of the archives' personnel:

⁶² W.S. Wallace, 'Some Vices of Clio,' *Canadian Historical Review* 7, 3 (September 1926): 201.

⁶³ Canadian Historical Association, Letter, December 1922, Arthur Doughty Papers, vol. 10.

⁶⁴ R.G. Trotter, 'Historical Research in Canada,' *Canadian Historical Review* 20, 3 (September 1939): 253.

⁶⁵ A.S. Morton to C. Martin, 4 October 1928, Arthur Morton Papers, MG 2, S 1, University of Saskatchewan Archives, I: Subject Files, 18: PAC, 1920-1941.

Those connected with the archives who have reached the age limit, so far as possible I have kept in their present positions. The Dominion Archivist, Doctor Doughty, has given long service, and since I have been administering this department I have secured two extensions of time for him because he is known to be very efficient indeed.⁶⁶

In 1934 the House of Commons again debated staffing at the archives. The Hon. Mr. Rinfret agreed that 'an archivist can be kept at work longer than the average man in other activities. Unless he is so very old that he cannot carry on the work properly I think age only adds to his experience and ability.' The Hon. Mr. Brown agreed, arguing that 'it has become a hobby with them men who have given their lives to this kind of work are more competent to carry on, despite the fact that they have passed the age limit.'⁶⁷

Although there was public acceptance of Doughty's permanence, historians continued to confer among themselves about his replacement. Four men were considered front runners. Duncan McArthur had worked with Doughty in the archives for many years, but his long involvement with the Liberal Party could make him 'unacceptable' to the government. Chester Martin had a professorial position in Manitoba, and 'it might not be easy to induce him to go to Ottawa.' A. L. Burt of the University of Alberta possessed 'all the social gifts which are so much in place in the head of the Archives.'⁶⁸ The internal candidate was Gustave Lanctôt, head of the French section of the archives, who was being considered in spite of the fact that Doughty was reported to enjoy 'almost hysterical opposition' to his candidacy.⁶⁹

Doughty officially retired in 1935, but he remained a constant presence in the archives, having been given the title Dominion Archivist Emeritus.⁷⁰ Conferring the title on Doughty, the prime minister, W.L.M. King, noted that 'so far as any department of the public service may be said to be the creation of one man, the department of public archives is certainly the creation of Doctor Doughty.'⁷¹ James Kenney, who had been

⁶⁶ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1932), p. 2244.

⁶⁷ Ibid. (1934), p. 1126.

⁶⁸ Morton to Sir R. Borden, 6 March 1931, Morton Papers, I: Subject Files, 18: PAC, 1920-1941.

⁶⁹ N. Fee to W. Pitfield, 9 March 1934, Norman Fee Papers, MG 30, D 143, NAC.

⁷⁰ Secretary of State to Doughty, 25 March 1935, Doughty Papers, vol. 10.

⁷¹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1935), p. 1959.

with the archives for several years, was appointed Acting Dominion Archivist pending a final decision on Doughty's successor.

After Doughty's death in 1937, Lanctôt won the position of Dominion Archivist, serving from 1937 to 1948. Lanctôt's tenure was hampered by necessary reallocations to support Canada's participation in the Second World War. The archives' administrative budget (excluding salaries) for 1940-41 was reduced from \$23,500 to \$10,500: a cut of 54 per cent.⁷² Archives staff left for overseas service. Storage space and facilities were commandeered for the war effort. As a result, any policy changes envisioned by historians or politicians were largely held in abeyance until after the end of the war.⁷³

A Reassessment of the Role of Archives

Doughty's philosophy of archives had been adopted by various members of his staff, who supported his liberal approach. Speaking to the new Society of American Archivists in 1937, James Kenney encouraged his American colleagues to develop archival methods 'applicable to the needs of this continent,' lamenting that existing manuals and studies applied more to European than North American conditions. He urged the maintenance of a 'clear distinction between archival service and historical service,' noting that 'our archives in Ottawa are consulted at least ten times for the purposes of history for the once that they are consulted for all other purposes.' In 1940, Kenney pointedly criticised European theories of classification. He did not see the value of distinguishing between the archives of government or corporate bodies and historical manuscripts, largely comprising personal or family papers. To him, it was a matter of 'indifference.' As long as common sense prevailed, he concluded, 'no terrible disaster need be feared among our records, even though occasionally the laws of Hilary Jenkinson be flouted.'⁷⁴

⁷² Canada, Archives, *Report* (1941), p. vii.

⁷³ These issues are discussed in Wilson, ' "A Noble Dream" ', p. 34-35.

⁷⁴ James Kenney, Speech, 1940, Kenney Papers, MG 30, C176, vol. 7, File: 8/19.

Duncan McArthur confirmed the broad cultural role of archival repositories. 'The function of archives is twofold,' he claimed, 'first to preserve all available historical records for present and future historians, amateur and professional; secondly to encourage in every way possible an interest in the history of the province and country.'⁷⁵ The Canadian Historical Association also advocated the view that government was directly responsible for the care of archival materials from all sources. Agreeing that historical societies and individuals 'can do much' to preserve local records, the association claimed that, 'in the final analysis,'

the primary obligation rests on governments, Dominion, provincial, and municipal, each in its own sphere of responsibility. If public bodies will not discharge this debt to themselves and to posterity there is little hope of any effective action.⁷⁶

Some historians were less than generous about Doughty's legacy. The historian Lawrence Burpee agreed that Doughty 'did admirable service to the country in securing invaluable papers from family records' but he maintained that 'as an administrator he did not, and could not, inspire much confidence.'⁷⁷ The New Brunswick historian Dr. Webster declared that 'we all know what Doughty's marked defects were as Director & Administrator.'⁷⁸ Lanctôt himself suggested that it was a 'lack of mutual confidence' between Doughty and government departments that had prohibited the transfer of public records and development of a public record office.⁷⁹

George Brown, who had urged Doughty in 1936 to take action on the management of government records,⁸⁰ claimed that 'there is a great opportunity for constructive work and in part along lines which Dr. Doughty did not consider.'⁸¹ Brown, who had served with the Public Records Committee, even took it upon himself to write directly to the

⁷⁵ D. McArthur, 'The Ontario Archives and the Historical Societies,' *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* 31 (1936): 5.

⁷⁶ 'Historical Records and the Canadian War Effort,' *Canadian Historical Review* 21, 2 (June 1940): 239-40. See also 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 4, 1 (January 1941): 70-71.

⁷⁷ L. Burpee to Lanctôt, 2 December 1937, Gustave Lanctôt Papers, MG 30, D95, NAC, vol. 7.

⁷⁸ See 'Approbation par des techniciens,' *ibid.*

⁷⁹ [G. Lanctôt,] 'Memorandum on the Public Archives, 18 November 1946, Canada, Public Records Committee Records, vol. 4.

⁸⁰ G. Brown to Doughty, 20 February 1936, Doughty Papers, vol. 10.

⁸¹ Brown to Lanctôt, 4 May 1938, Lanctôt Papers, vol. 7.

head of the National Archives in Washington, D.C., requesting information on records management systems. He acknowledged that Canada's Public Archives was not a public record office 'in the proper sense of the term' and expressed his appreciation for 'any suggestions which you feel might be helpful.'⁸²

Not everyone laid blame on Doughty's personality. Some analysts recognised that the twentieth century, especially the Second World War, had been a time of fundamental change in the nature and scope of records, particularly public records. More sophisticated communications technologies had been developed, including wireless communications, typewriters, and telephones. Government was becoming more complex and bureaucratic. As a result, information was being generated at a greater rate than ever before. In the face of vast quantities of public records, federal and provincial governments in Canada faced acute storage problems. The need to appraise records, and to destroy unwanted information, was a new archival reality, one that had not formed part of Doughty's thinking.

Doughty's acquisition-oriented system had been suitable for the acquisition and preservation of historical materials but not for the care of current government records. As Kenney wrote in 1936, if unneeded modern public records were not destroyed, 'the country would soon be paying more for the housing of records than for the housing of the administrative offices of the Government.'⁸³ The historian George Brown agreed, claiming that government records 'are going to be of increasing and essential importance in providing information on which sound policy and administration must rest.'⁸⁴

Recognising the changing nature, and quantity, of public records, historians again agitated for proper care of public records. A Canadian Historical Association survey of archival activity, conducted in 1944, showed 'a distressing failure' to care for public records. This neglect was 'a matter of serious concern not merely to historians, but to

⁸² Brown to S. Buck, 16 February 1946, Canada, Public Records Committee Records, vol. 4.

⁸³ J. Kenney, Acting Dominion Archivist, to W.K. Lamb, Provincial Archivist, British Columbia, 4 December 1936, NAC Records, vol. 61, File: 65-5-10, vol. 1.

⁸⁴ G.W. Brown, 'Provincial Archives in Canada,' *Canadian Historical Review* 16, 1 (March 1935): 3.

governments themselves and to the public at large.’⁸⁵ The Association urged a turn away from Doughty’s collecting legacy:

There is far too prevalent an idea that an archives is a kind of antiquarian museum -- a desirable possession, doubtless, for any government, but very remote from the problems of the practical world. No misconception in this matter could be more unfortunate Any archives, if it is to play its essential role must be a growing repository to which records of government departments are transferred after a lapse of years.⁸⁶

Another critic encouraged the national archives to take responsibility for modern public records, which were essential for future historical research. ‘Much valuable historical material may be lost,’ he cried, ‘if this question is not faced fully and at once.’⁸⁷

One historian in particular saw archives in a dramatically different way from Doughty. Arthur Morton, from the University of Saskatchewan, saw a clear difference between records of government and those generated from non-government sources. He argued that Canadians should enforce the distinction exemplified by the Public Record Office and British Museum in England. ‘These differences,’ he claimed, ‘have been carefully thought out in Great Britain’:

‘The Keeper of the Rolls’ concerns himself solely with the government documents, and the British Museum, with many historians gathered around it collects the loose and unauthenticated documents bearing on the history of the land.

Morton urged that more attention should be paid to government documents, which formed ‘the most important single body of historical material.’⁸⁸

Morton endorsed Hilary Jenkinson’s view of archives. Interpreting Jenkinson’s definition to mean that ‘archives are the body of documents created by a corporation or State in the transaction of its business,’ Morton saw this as distinct from ‘the collection of floating historical material, which the Canadian public usually thinks of as Archives.’⁸⁹ Speaking of the situation in Saskatchewan, Morton recommended that the government

⁸⁵ ‘The Preservation of Historical Materials in Canada,’ *ibid.*, 25, 3 (September 1944): 249-50.

⁸⁶ Editorial, *ibid.*, 16, 2 (June 1935), pp. 218-19.

⁸⁷ ‘The Public Archives and the National Library,’ *ibid.*, 30, 1 (March 1949): 101-2.

⁸⁸ Morton to Major Barnett, Department of Natural Resources, Regina, Saskatchewan, 8 January 1930, Morton Papers, I: Subject Files, 15: Provincial Archives, 1917-1944.

⁸⁹ Morton to Lower, 12 June 1938, *ibid.*

archives care for public records and that a committee of the university be responsible for the collection of historical material. Morton did not deny the role of the historian. On the contrary, he felt the scholar was the archivist's 'best guide' to identifying which records were needed for historical research. He argued that 'in the matter of collecting historical material in general the University is as much and even more interested than the Provincial Archivist would be.'⁹⁰ Nor did he reject the validity of collecting 'the floating material,' but he did argue for 'an office whose sole duty was the care of the Provincial Records.'⁹¹

Others agreed that public records needed better care, but they did not accept a narrow definition of archival materials. Morton's colleague in Saskatchewan, the historian Lewis Thomas, defined a record as 'anything which tells ... about the past. A place name, a handbill, a poster, a building, an accent -- each of these is as much a record as is a book, a letter, or a newspaper.' Thomas did distinguish between public records -- 'the records produced and preserved by governments and their agencies' -- and all other records, which he designated as private. Thomas did acknowledge that provincial records required special care, because of their legal value, their origins as part of government organisation, and their importance to government. 'The custodian of public records is concerned primarily with his responsibility to the government, and only secondarily with the interests of historians.' But public repositories had a responsibility to preserve private records as well.⁹²

Morton's and Thomas's visions were blended in the establishment of the Saskatchewan Archives Board in 1945. The new provincial archives, administratively connected with the University of Saskatchewan, was given responsibility for both government records and private papers. Indeed, it was explicitly mandated to pursue an active acquisition programme; its Archives' Act stated that 'the Provincial Archivist may acquire by gift, devise, or in any other manner, and place in the archives printed

⁹⁰ Morton to Barnett, 8 January 1930, *ibid.*

⁹¹ Morton to Lower, 12 June 1938, *ibid.*

⁹² L.H. Thomas, 'Memorandum on the Promotion of the Study of Provincial and Community History in Saskatchewan,' George Simpson Papers, MG 7, S 1, University of Saskatchewan Archives, Series 5: Provincial Archives, pp. 6-9.

documents, manuscripts, records, private papers and any other material, to whomsoever belonging, having a bearing on the history of Saskatchewan.'⁹³ Although the government recognised the need to preserve its own records for research purposes, it also recognised a duty to acquire private-sector records.

The establishment of a provincial archives in Saskatchewan signalled a growing recognition of need for local repositories. The notion that the Public Archives would serve as the historical laboratory for Canada was outdated and inappropriate. One historian argued that:

it is neither practical nor advisable that the preservation of provincial records should be undertaken by the Dominion archives. Provincial records should be available for consultation both by students and government departments in the capital of the province. There are provincial interest and loyalties which can only be served adequately by the province itself.⁹⁴

George Brown called for provincial activity, arguing that 'the provinces are morally, at least, responsible to themselves and to the people of the whole dominion to see that these essential records of Canada's development are not neglected.'⁹⁵ Lewis Thomas also argued for a role for provincial and local repositories, suggesting that local interests were best served by local collections.⁹⁶

Changes at the Public Archives of Canada

After Doughty's death, the federal government again took steps to ensure the preservation of public records. In 1944, a Committee on Public Records was established, ostensibly to consider the management of wartime records. The Committee surveyed records in government departments and in a number of boards and agencies. Subsequent to the survey, the Committee reported on its findings and recommended that it be

⁹³ 'An Act Respecting the Archives of Saskatchewan,' Appendix I, Saskatchewan Archives Board, *First Report of the Saskatchewan Archives for the period April 1, 1945, to May 31, 1946* (Regina: Bureau of Publications, 1946), p. 33.

⁹⁴ 'A 'Practical' Plea, *Canadian Historical Review* 15, 3 (September 1934): 245-47.

⁹⁵ G.W. Brown, 'Provincial Archives in Canada,' *Canadian Historical Review* 16, 1 (March 1935): 3.

⁹⁶ L.H. Thomas, 'Memorandum on the Promotion of the Study of Provincial and Community History in Saskatchewan,' p. 15.

constituted as a permanent committee to advise on ‘measures to provide for the organisation, care, housing and, where possible, destruction of public records.’⁹⁷ In 1945 the permanent Committee on Public Records was formed to ‘keep under constant review the state of the public records’ and to advise on their care, housing, and particularly on the destruction of unwanted records. The committee was also charged to oversee the establishment of a public records office and ensure its ‘integration’ with the Public Archives.⁹⁸

What exactly should that integrated archival repository consist of? In the House of Commons in 1947, the Hon. Mr. Jackman requested an answer:

Would the minister consider, at little or no expense, having some of our historians, aided by the director general, draft a report so that we would have a definite policy for our archives and get together our national treasures, which may be lost if we do not act with promptness.⁹⁹

No such report was prepared, but in the same year an attempt was made to revise the Public Records Act, in an effort to clarify the distinction between the care of public and private records. The revised act would rename the Public Archives as the National Archives, in accordance with the style in other countries, and would confirm the National Archives as a fully fledged public record office. Despite efforts to gain government consent, the Public Archives Act was not amended.¹⁰⁰ While the Public Archives had a responsibility for government archives, this responsibility was not as explicit as some wanted.

Conclusion

Arthur Doughty single-handedly created a unique Canadian archival environment; one where buttons and medals enjoyed equal status with letters and reports, where seeking out elusive private documents took precedence over arranging and classifying government

⁹⁷ W.E.D. Halliday, ‘Report of the Advisory Committee on Public Records,’ 16 July 1945, p. 11, Canada, Public Records Committee Records, vol. 4.

⁹⁸ Canada, Privy Council, ‘Order in Council Establishing the Committee on Public Records,’ P.C. 6175, Ottawa, 20 September 1945, *ibid.*, vol. 2, PRC: 1960-61.

⁹⁹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1947), p. 4661.

¹⁰⁰ Lanctôt to C. Gibson, Secretary of State, 29 December 1947, NAC Records, vol. 303, File: Public Archives Act.

records. The formalisation of Brymner's work in the nineteenth century into an actual archival office in the twentieth was seen by historians as a success. Doughty met little opposition from scholars to his collecting, although he and his assistants were criticised, often severely, by those whose identities were more regional than national. But in the absence of other active national cultural institutions, Doughty performed a service unmatched elsewhere in government or in the private sector. The Archives was the nation's treasure house.

Doughty's thirty-year tenure left a legacy hard to overcome. The Dominion Archives had established itself as an historical laboratory, the source of all information about the history of Canada. By the time the Public Archives Act came into force in 1912, the accepted practices of the nineteenth century -- collecting, copying, publishing, and service to scholarship -- were firmly embedded in the mandates of both national and provincial archival repositories. Efforts to encourage the care of government records were not to be promoted at the expense of private records acquisition.

As historians turned their attention to post-Confederation history, they continued to agitate for a public record office. Without proper care of government records, particularly with the plethora of information arising from modern wartime and postwar records practices, their ability to write comprehensive histories would be severely hindered. But interested as they were in the preservation of records for research use, historians did not refute the accepted notion that government-funded archival repositories also had a responsibility for the acquisition of non-government records. This concept was sufficiently established in Canadian archival consciousness not to be shaken by new imperatives. The government archives, not a library, museum, or special collections, had a mandate to manage both public and private records.

The post-war economic boom, which began in the late 1940s, was an ideal time for a review of archival policy. In fact, the technological changes of the twentieth century, and the growth in information and paper, inevitably led to a review of the nature and purpose of archives. For the first time, the destruction of records became as pressing a question as their acquisition. At the same time, there was a recognition by government

that the identity of Canada was still not as strong and unified as might be desired. A strong archival presence could help bolster national sentiment in the face of regional identities.

In 1949, a government commission was established to scrutinise not just archival policies but cultural policy as a whole. The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences was charged with ‘examining the very soul of Canada as a nation.’¹⁰¹ The Commission could have changed the course of archival practice to the increasingly well-known European model, delineated by archivists such as Jenkinson. It could have limited government archival repositories to the care of public records and encouraged the establishment of special libraries or museums, either publicly or privately funded, to acquire and preserve private records. However, far from making such recommendations, the strongly nationalistic Commission actually entrenched existing Canadian archival practice, especially the preservation of private records by public agencies, because the practice, though idiosyncratic, was above all *Canadian*.

¹⁰¹ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates* (1949), p. 219.

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST:

ARCHIVES AND THE MASSEY COMMISSION, 1949-1951

It is just possible that to Canada the Second World War may be what the defeat of the Spanish Armada was to Elizabethan England, the letting loose of a genuine and all-embracing patriotism. It might and should be accompanied by a real advance in Canadian art, literature, and in the writing of Canadian history.

Walter Sage, 1945¹

Introduction

Canada's place in the world was reshaped by its participation in the Second World War. Canada had joined the war independent of Britain, and the tremendous successes and tragic failures experienced by Canadians served to bring the country together as never before. After the war the country sought to build on this emerging national identity. Canada was beginning to see itself as truly distinct from its British antecedents, and it endeavoured to distance itself from its American neighbours.

The arts and culture were critical to the promotion of this sense of nationalism. But the economic stringencies of the Second World War had curtailed many publicly funded cultural and artistic programmes in Canada, including archival work. Some lamented the restrictions; others approved the regulation of limited resources. The few cultural and literary activities undertaken during the war were funded privately, many by foreign organisations such as the American-based Carnegie Corporation and Rockefeller

¹ W.N. Sage, 'Where Stands Canadian History?', *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1945): 5.

Foundation or the British-based Baldwin Trust.² The federal government's own cultural endeavours were limited to war-related projects, such as those by the Bureau of Public Information, the National Film Board, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

After the war, Canadians sought a clearer understanding not only of national identity but also of the future of Canadian society. In 1949, the federal government established a Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. The Commission was charged with examining the role of the government in the area of arts and culture. The recommendations of this Commission were to change Canada's cultural environment dramatically, in areas ranging from theatre and dance to fine arts and literature.

Archival activity fell within the scope of the Commission's investigations. With its inclusion in a study of arts and culture, archival management was perceived as a cultural rather than administrative task. It was scrutinised for its cultural and social relevance rather than any bureaucratic requirements. The Commission recognised the administrative realities of records management, realities brought on in part from changes in bureaucracy, business, and communications. However, the Commission did not emphasise administrative concerns to the exclusion of the societal value of archival records. The desire to promote a national identity was too strong to relegate to second place.

The Commission's archival recommendations included the expansion of acquisition programmes, better care of public records, increased funding for archival activities, and improved training for archivists. The recommendations encouraged enhanced archival services, which would foster scholarly study and encourage public interest in history. Because the Commission was concerned with federal programmes, its investigation of archival work, and its subsequent recommendations, centred on the role of the Public Archives of Canada. However, the policies embodied in the Commission's

² See M. Tippet, *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1990), especially chapters 5 and 6.

report affected all manner of archival repositories across Canada, federal, provincial, and local.

The Origins of the Massey Commission

Since Confederation in 1867, the federal government had proclaimed a policy of non-intervention in cultural affairs. Culture was considered a provincial responsibility. However, this policy had never been maintained in practice. The federal government had a history of over eighty years of cultural spending which, while not excessive in amount, had set an obvious precedent.

In 1942, the Canadian House of Commons formed a Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment. Its mandate was to examine and report on the reconstruction problems that would face Canadian society at the end of the war. Among the submissions received by the Committee during its investigation was the 'Artists' Brief to the Reconstruction Committee.' This brief, prepared in 1944, was a combined effort by sixteen cultural organisations representing artists, architects, writers, musicians, and performers. They called for a significant increase in government involvement in the arts and culture in Canada. Their suggestions included the establishment of a government body to administer arts programmes, the formation of government-supported community art centres across the country, and the creation of a national library and a government publishing house.³ The brief did not cause an explosion of publicly funded arts organisations, but it did spur the government to examine its responsibility for cultural activity. It also helped to coordinate the artistic community: the sixteen organisations established themselves as the Canadian Arts Council.

Two other events put pressure on the Canadian government to consider its responsibility for arts and culture. The first was the formation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which held its first general assembly in Paris in 1946. Article VII of UNESCO's constitution called for the

³ See *ibid.*, pp. 171-72.

appointment in each member country ‘of a National Commission or Co-operating Body, representative of principal associations interested in the work of the Organization.’⁴ Canada had no such national commission. (Indeed, Canada was officially represented at the first UNESCO meeting not by members of government but by two individuals from the newly established Canadian Arts Council.) Somehow the government had to establish an appropriate body to represent Canada at UNESCO.

The second significant event was the formation in Great Britain of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1945 and the visit to Canada by its Vice Chairman B. Ilfor Evans in 1947.⁵ During his visit, Evans spoke out about Canada’s lack of a government-sponsored arts council.⁶ He questioned the federal government’s argument that it could not participate in cultural affairs because these fell under provincial jurisdiction. He pointed out that the Canadian government had been funding cultural works for many years. For example, he argued, it had employed artists and musicians during the war and had supported the work of the National Gallery and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts; it had also allowed the participation of the Canadian Arts Council at the UNESCO meetings.⁷ Although Evans did not mention it, federal funds had also been provided to the Public Archives to serve the needs of research and scholarship. Federal government support for Canada’s culture, deliberate or not, was undeniable. In the face of this reality, the government needed to clarify its role in arts and culture. To do so, it established the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, popularly known as the Massey Commission after its chairman, Vincent Massey.

⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 175-76.

⁵ The Arts Council of Great Britain had been established in 1945, within a national structure but with an arms-length relationship to government. Its purpose was to support, promote, and increase accessibility to fine arts in the country. See J. Pick, *Vile Jelly: The Birth, Life, and Lingering Death of the Arts Council of Great Britain* (Doncaster, UK: Brynmill, 1991).

⁶ M. Tippet, ‘The Origins of the Canada Council: ‘The Most Generous Sugar Daddy Arts Has Ever Known,’ ‘ in P. Easingwood, K. Gross, and W. Kloos, eds., *Probing Canadian Culture* (Augsburg, GER: AV-Verlag, 1991), pp. 38-51.

⁷ Tippet, *Making Culture*, pp. 180-82.

The Mandate and Structure of the Massey Commission

The Massey Commission was tasked to examine a broad range of issues:

(a) the principles upon which the policy of Canada should be based, in the fields of radio and television broadcasting;

(b) such agencies and activities of the government of Canada as the National Film Board, the National Gallery, the National Museum, the National War Museum, the Public Archives and the care and custody of public records, the Library of Parliament, methods by which research is aided including grants for scholarships through various Federal Government agencies; the eventual character and scope of the National Library; the scope or activities of these agencies; the manner in which they should be conducted, financed and controlled, and other matters relevant thereto;

(c) methods by which the relations of Canada with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and with other organizations operating in this field should be conducted;

(d) relations of the government of Canada and any of its agencies with the various national voluntary bodies operating in the field with which this inquiry will be concerned.⁸

To this extensive mandate, the Prime Minister later added two tasks: to examine ‘methods for the purpose of making available to the people of foreign countries adequate information concerning Canada’ and to consider ‘measures for the preservation of historical monuments.’⁹

There was a strongly nationalistic imperative to the work of the Commission. The prime minister, Louis St. Laurent, argued that ‘it is in the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life.’ The Canadian search for a national identity intensified as Canada grew concerned about its relationship with the powerful and dominant United States of America. Canada was a geographically immense country with a small, scattered population, most living close to the border with the vastly larger and economically more powerful United States. Many Canadians feared

⁸ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, *Report* (Ottawa, ON: Kings’ Printer, 1951), p. xii. (Hereafter cited as Canada, Royal Commission on National Development.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.xii, xxi.

that the close proximity, shared language, and close political and economic relations between the two countries could only damage the essence of 'Canadianism.' Canadians risked becoming dependent on American ideas, American culture, and American money.

The Commission did not deny the danger from Canada's neighbour. It urged Canadians not to be blind to the danger of 'permanent dependence' on American aid. The Carnegie Corporation, for example, had given over \$7 million to Canada for cultural projects since 1911; the Rockefeller Foundation had donated nearly \$12 million since 1914. 'Our use of American institutions, or our lazy, even abject, imitation of them,' the Commission charged, 'has caused an uncritical acceptance of ideas and assumptions which are alien to our tradition.' The Commission hoped that its recommendations would put a stop to this foreign infiltration.¹⁰

The Commission's chair, the Right Honourable Charles Vincent Massey, was Chancellor of the University of Toronto. The Masseys were the closest Canada came to America's Carnegies or Rockefellers. The family had made its fortune in the manufacture and sale of farm machinery and, following its Christian principles of charity and stewardship, had become an enthusiastic patron of arts and culture in Canada. The Massey Foundation, founded in 1918 from the estate of Vincent Massey's grandfather, Hart Massey, was the first major charitable arts foundation in Canada, supporting symphony orchestras, the collection of works of art, and theatrical and cultural groups across the country. The foundation had been chaired by Vincent Massey since 1926; it was a way for him to express his support for a traditional, British-oriented vision of culture.¹¹

Massey was joined on the Commission by a number of prominent Canadians, mostly academics. Norman A.M. Mackenzie was President of the University of British Columbia, and the Most Reverend Georges-Henri Levesque was Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval University. Hilda Neatby was Professor of History and Acting Head of the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan, and Arthur

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. xi, 15, 18.

¹¹ For a discussion of the Massey legacy, see Tippet, *Making Culture*, esp. chapter 4.

Surveyor was a civil engineer in Montreal. The Commission travelled across the country several times to hold hearings with cultural and social organisations. It received a wide range of briefs and submissions, and several committees were struck to prepare reports on specific topics, including public records, museums, historic sites and monuments, the humanities, and publishing. The Commission presented its final report in 1951.

Research into Archives

Various organisations presented briefs relating to the state of history and archives in Canada. Among these were the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, the Canadian Library Association, the British Columbia Historical Society, and the Ontario Historical Society, the Canadian Historical Association, and the Saskatchewan Archives Board. Many of these groups also sent representatives to Commission hearings, answering the Commission's questions about the relevance of history and archives to Canadian society. The Commission charged the historian Colonel C.P. Stacey to write a study of the role of national and provincial archival repositories in Canada.¹² W. Kaye Lamb, who had succeeded Gustave Lanctôt as Dominion Archivist in 1948, also participated actively in the research of the Commission, both as a public servant and as a representative of various historical societies.

Several of the issues raised in these reports and presentations were critical to the development of the Commission's recommendations on archival management. Four critical concerns were: the role of government in the acquisition of private records; the current state of preservation of public records; the role of a new National Library; and the need for training for archivists.

¹² C.P. Stacey, 'The Problem of Canadian Archives: A Special Study Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,' 2 June 1950, Hilda Neatby Papers, Saskatchewan Archives Board, A 139. Stacey, a recipient of the Order of the British Empire, was the director of the Historical Section, Army Headquarters, in Ottawa, when he wrote this report in 1950. His report was later published as *Canadian Archives: An Essay prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951* (Ottawa, ON: Edmond Cloutier, 1951).

Private Records Acquisition by the Public Archives

The Massey Commission considered the dual role of the Public Archives, as both a repository for government records and an institution acquiring private records. It received many reports urging the continuation of an active private records acquisition programme at the Public Archives of Canada. The Canadian Historical Association, for example, argued that ‘in some fields of history private collections of papers are more valuable than public records.’¹³ The Commission found two presentations to be particularly influential. The first was a background paper written for the Commission by W. Kaye Lamb and his assistant Norman Fee explaining the acquisition orientation of the Public Archives. The second was the report by C.P. Stacey on the nature of public archives.

Lamb and Fee offered an overview of the development of the Public Archives. They explained how the initial request for the creation of a national archives had come from writers and historians. They noted that the ‘primary aim’ of the Archives had been to serve these historians, ‘and such members of the general public as were interested in the history of the country.’¹⁴ In his presentation to the Commission, Lamb expanded on his report, explaining that ‘collections were never confined to archives, strictly speaking.’¹⁵ The Public Archives had always acquired a range of materials, including copies, maps, books, prints, and paintings. Lamb and Fee defended this acquisition orientation, arguing that archivists like Brymner and Doughty had ‘felt a certain reluctance to see the more colourful and picturesque records of an earlier age drowned out, as it were, by a vast torrent of more or less contemporary files.’¹⁶

At the suggestion that responsibility for private-sector records could be transferred elsewhere, Lamb argued that it would have to be justified somewhere in the public

¹³ Canadian Historical Association, ‘Brief Prepared by the Canadian Historical Association for Submission to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,’ n.d., Neatby Papers, no. 129.

¹⁴ W.K. Lamb and N. Fee, ‘Public Archives of Canada,’ n.d., Neatby Papers, no. 341, p. 3.

¹⁵ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development, ‘Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Public Archives and Administration Public Records,’ 4th session, Ottawa, 10 August 1949, Neatby Papers, p. 185.

¹⁶ Lamb and Fee, ‘Public Archives of Canada,’ p. 4.

budget. It was a legitimate responsibility for the Public Archives; the problem was simply logistical. As Dominion Archivist, all Lamb needed in order to do his job properly were more buildings, more staff, and 'proper departmentalization within the institution.'¹⁷

In his report, C.P. Stacey argued in favour of continuing the archives' acquisition programme. He identified the archives' three principal users as the departments of government, the general public, and historical scholars. He argued that service to the government was the 'smallest of the Archives' functions,' because 'only a small proportion of public business requires consultation of 'obsolete' records.' Similarly, service to the general public was not 'a task of primary importance,' though Stacey acknowledged that it was 'a large task and one that must be done.' To Stacey, historical scholars were the Archives' most important clientele. The Archives, he argued, 'has made a vital contribution to the development of Canadian historical scholarship and literature -- and through them to Canadian cultural life and the growth of Canadian national spirit.'¹⁸

Stacey claimed that the national repository was a 'magnet' for scholars. To serve this clientele, continued acquisition of all types of records was essential. Stacey noted that 'most historians are people of modest means, and cannot afford to travel about the country in pursuit of scattered little pockets of records.' By continuing to acquire records, the Public Archives would ensure the centralised collection of essential research materials. Acquisition would also ease the burden on other jurisdictions, for 'it is perhaps too much to expect individual cities and towns to maintain archives establishments of any size.'¹⁹

Stacey agreed that the Archives' holdings were 'heterogeneous,' but he rejected as unrealistic the argument that 'the Archives should hold only public records in the narrow sense, leaving to other institutions the other categories of historical material.' He

¹⁷ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development, 'Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Public Archives and Administration Public Records,' pp. 212-16.

¹⁸ Stacey, 'The Problem of Canadian Archives,' p. 3.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

suggested that such a distinction would be inconvenient for historical research and expensive for taxpayers, 'for it would involve the maintenance of at least two institutions to do the work now done by one.' To Stacey, the government had a responsibility to maintain repositories for historical research, whether the material in them was publicly or privately generated. The maintenance of one centralised repository, responsible for all records 'valuable for the reconstruction of Canada's past,' was a 'sound principle.'²⁰

The Need for a Public Record Office

In spite of strong support for an acquisition programme, most groups also lobbied the government for improved care of government records. The Canadian Historical Association explicitly requested that the Public Archives' responsibility for government records be strengthened. The Association even appended to its report a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada, emphasising the research value of public records:

While we welcome, and indeed urge, the acquisition of collections of private papers and documents of all kinds from the Public Archives, we believe firmly that the great source of the history of this country is and will remain the official documents of its national government and especially the official papers of its public men.²¹

The Canadian Historical Association's representative A.L. Burt conceded that in other countries responsibility for public and private records was usually assigned to separate institutions. He agreed that the Public Archives had undertaken both functions, 'but the function of an historical manuscript repository has tended to obscure in the public mind the other function.'²² The British Columbia Historical Association pressed for the systematic management of public records. It was particularly concerned that records documenting provincial development be secured, as many of these were in fact federal

²⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

²¹ A. Maheux to Prime Minister W.L.M. King, 17 July 1948, Appendix I to Canadian Historical Association, 'Brief Prepared by the Canadian Historical Association.'

²² Canadian Historical Association, 'Brief Presented to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences by the Canadian Historical Association,' 14th Session, Ottawa, 19 August 1949, Neatby Papers, pp. 582-83.

government property.²³ The Saskatchewan Archives Board echoed this, urging the preservation by the Public Archives of federal records relating to the development of the Canadian west.²⁴

Dominion Archivist Lamb supported the Archives' role as a public record office. Only a lack of space in the Archives prohibited the transfer of vast quantities of public records from government departments.²⁵ He recognised both the research value of government records and the need to destroy unwanted materials. As early as the 1930s and 1940s, Lamb had stated his belief that not all government records were worth keeping, and that the destruction of unwanted files was necessary to ensure that valuable records were retained.²⁶

Lamb was fully aware that Canadian archival repositories had not followed the path outlined by Hilary Jenkinson, which claimed that the authenticity and integrity of public archives were best protected by managing records within the confines of the sponsor institution. He was also aware that Jenkinson had advocated that archivists not be responsible for the selection of archival records. Lamb had visited the Public Record Office to monitor the Public Archives' continuing copying work, and in 1950 he worked with Jenkinson to install a camera in the Public Record Office to microfilm records for the Canadian repository.²⁷ Lamb later even contributed to a publication in memory of Jenkinson, writing an article on appraisal. In this article he suggested that Jenkinson had not anticipated the need for records management systems or for the destruction of unwanted records.²⁸

²³ British Columbia Historical Association, 'Brief Prepared by the British Columbia Historical Association for Submission to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,' Neatby Papers, no. 53.

²⁴ Saskatchewan Archives Board, 'A Submission by the Saskatchewan Archives Board to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,' Neatby Papers, no. 361, p. 3.

²⁵ Lamb and Fee, 'Public Archives of Canada,' p. 4.

²⁶ For a discussion of Lamb's early ideas, see E. Eso, 'W. Kaye Lamb and the Provincial Archives of British Columbia 1934-1939,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1984.

²⁷ Public Archives of Canada, *Annual Report*, 1950, esp. p. 14.

²⁸ See W. K. Lamb, 'The Fine Art of Destruction,' in A. Hollaender, ed., *Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Chicester, UK: Moore and Tillyer, 1962).

Presenting his ideas on appraisal to the Massey Commission, Lamb faced some opposition. The historian Hilda Neatby was particularly concerned about the method used to select records for destruction. In his report, Lamb had argued that only records of 'permanent historic interest' would be retained. Neatby's annotation, in bold ink, read 'How do you know?'.²⁹ When questioned further about the criteria for appraisal, Lamb could only answer that it required a certain amount of 'guess work'.³⁰

In recognising a responsibility for public records, Lamb did not see this as in conflict with the cultural role of the Public Archives. Lamb agreed that the word 'archives' was misleading; 'it is to a great extent associated with antiquarianism a kind of ivory tower in which a few historians dream away a happy existence.' The Archives' current responsibilities included a 'public records office, the historical manuscripts office, a museum, and a national portrait gallery.' This was becoming impossible to sustain, Lamb complained, even though in an ideal world all such material would be in one building.³¹

Calls for a National Library

As the Commission considered the proper role of the Public Archives, it also had to consider the Archives' relationship with a new National Library. There had been agitation for a national library for a number of years. In 1946, the Canadian Library Association, the Canadian Historical Association, and other organisations had presented a brief to the Canadian government calling for action.³² One scholar was critical of the lack of such a facility in Canada, maintaining that 'the nations which possess the most

²⁹ Lamb and Fee, 'Public Archives of Canada,' p. 6.

³⁰ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development, 'Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Public Archives and Administration Public Records,' p. 209.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 202-3.

³² See Canadian Library Association, Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques, the Canadian Historical Association, the Canadian Political Science Association, and the Social Science Research Council of Canada, 'A National Library for Canada: A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada,' December 1946, National Archives of Canada Records, RG 37, National Archives of Canada, vol. 302, File: National Library. (Hereafter cited as NAC Records.)

extensive libraries maintain the foremost rank in civilization.’³³ Another argued that ‘a national library service is needed urgently The requirements of scholarship, of practical affairs, and of Canada’s international relations are all affected by it.’³⁴ During the Commission’s investigations, the Canadian Library Association reiterated its request for a national library. It urged that such an institution would be responsible for a wide range of Canadiana, including films, sound recordings, and microfilm of rare and out-of-print materials. It should also become a depository for federal government publications.³⁵

In November 1950, Lamb wrote a confidential letter to Archibald Day, Secretary to the Royal Commission. In it, Lamb argued that the National Library and Public Archives should be maintained as a single institution, housed in a common building, with a ‘proper’ division of functions. He suggested that once the two branches had established their distinct functions, they could then be separated, as long as facilities such as a joint reading room were maintained. In this way, ‘research workers would still be able to consult manuscript and printed material at the same time and at the same desk.’³⁶

Lamb saw one critical advantage to a dual institution; it would prevent the development of a second acquisition-oriented archival repository. Such materials as maps and personal papers would continue to be the responsibility of the Archives, even though they often fell within the mandate of national libraries in other countries. In Canada, in a joint institution, the National Library would not have the mandate to create its own collection, ‘something that would otherwise be virtually certain to happen sooner or later.’³⁷

Lamb’s scheme was unusual, but his experience with both archives and libraries was well respected. Before heading the Public Archives, Lamb had served as both provincial archivist and provincial librarian in British Columbia and as university

³³ F. Derochers, ‘A National Library for Canada,’ *Canadian Historical Review* 25, 1 (March 1944): 105-6.

³⁴ ‘The Canadian Library Association and the National Library,’ *Canadian Historical Review* 28, 3 (September 1947): 355.

³⁵ ‘The National Library,’ *Canadian Historical Review* 30, 3 (September 1949): 301.

³⁶ W.K. Lamb to A.A. Day, 23 November 1950, Neatby Papers.

³⁷ Ibid.

librarian at the University of British Columbia. Not everyone agreed with his idea, though; his colleague Lewis Thomas at the Saskatchewan Archives Board urged protection of the 'distinctive interests' of the archives and library.³⁸

The Commission expressed concern about staffing an organisation with combined responsibilities. During the hearings, Hilda Neatby asked Margaret Ormsby, the president of the British Columbia Historical Society, about the preferred qualifications for such personnel. 'It is useful,' Neatby began, 'for an archivist to be a historian, but would you want to confine yourselves to historians in setting out a National Library?' Ormsby, who advocated an amalgamated institution, said she was 'prejudiced' in favour of historians.³⁹

Staffing and Training in the Public Archives

The Massey Commission was concerned not only with staffing in the new National Library but also with the selection and training of archivists in the Public Archives. Many submissions to the Commission called for the development of archival training programmes. Some also urged a more professional approach to staffing at the Public Archives.

Lewis Thomas asked that local training be established for archivists, as opposed to training in Europe or England.⁴⁰ But while he encouraged the establishment of an archival training course at the Public Archives, he did not feel there was sufficient technical information to warrant a purely theoretical programme. Referring to the course offered by the National Archives and Records Service in the United States, Lewis claimed that it attempted to combine both theoretical and practical issues, but that there was a tendency 'not to follow up the practical aspect of the course sufficiently.'⁴¹ Lamb

³⁸ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development, 'Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Saskatchewan Archives Board,' 3 November 1949, Neatby Papers, pp. 109-10.

³⁹ British Columbia Historical Association, 'Briefs Presented to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences by British Columbia Historical Association,' 50th Session, Vancouver, 25 October 1949, Neatby Papers, p. 230.

⁴⁰ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development, 'Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Saskatchewan Archives Board,' pp. 102-4.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 111-12. By 1955, two American courses were offered with the American University and the Maryland Hall of Records, one on records management and one on archival administration.

advocated reinstating the historical summer school started by Doughty, which had ceased in 1936. He suggested that this course, originally intended to encourage historical research, should be expanded to include archival instruction.⁴²

Specific staffing concerns at the Public Archives were discussed more privately. It seemed that there was some truth to those complaints made by politicians over the years that people in the Archives had jobs for life, regardless of their qualifications. The Commission was advised of the inadequate state of the Archives' staff through a memorandum prepared by an unidentified Commission representative. This representative had apparently reviewed a report written by Lamb's assistant Norman Fee and then visited the Archives in person to examine the staff before offering his opinion.

In his memorandum, this representative argued that future appointments be given only to 'professional archivists.' He noted that of the 34 members of staff currently classed as professionals, only 18 had university degrees. He questioned the employment of three people to handle genealogical requests. 'It is a question whether in view of other important work which remains undone, this large sum should be set aside for serving purely private interests ... which make no particular contribution to general historical knowledge.'⁴³

He also indicated that in conversation with a senior member of the Archives, 'certainly not unprejudiced,' it became clear that several divisions operated poorly. Minimal work was done by the publications division, and the head 'does nothing.' There was a rumour that Mr. Brault, the head of the information division, 'occasionally ... finds a question too hard for him and refers the writer to the 'Ottawa Information Division' where it will be answered for a fee.' As it turned out, this 'Ottawa Information Division'

See American University, 'Institutes on Records Management and Archives Administration, brochure, 1955, Archives of Ontario Records, RG17, Archives of Ontario, s 15.

⁴² Canadian Historical Association, 'Brief Presented to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences by the Canadian Historical Association,' p. 602. See also Canada, Royal Commission, on National Development, 'Extract from Minutes of 47th Meeting of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, June 20th, 1950,' Canada, Public Records Committee, vol. 7, File: Massey Commission, p. 3.

⁴³ N. Fee, 'Memorandum to Mr. Massey: The Report by Mr. Fee on the Staff of the Public Archives,' Ottawa, 24 August 1950, Neatby Papers. Note that the original report refers to 'two metal [sic] cases'; this is assumed to be a typographical error and has been silently corrected.

was headquartered at Mr. Brault's residence. Finally, the reporter noted, the archives' staff included 'two admitted mental cases' and 'one poetess who knows nothing and cares nothing but must be kept harmlessly employed.'⁴⁴

The Recommendations of the Massey Commission

From the myriad of briefs and submissions, from the various reports and correspondence, and from its extensive public hearings, the Massey Commission developed an extensive list of recommendations on Canadian arts and culture. Issues covered included broadcasting and publishing, the management of historical monuments, and funding for the arts. The Commission's recommendations were premised on a fundamental belief in public responsibility for Canada's culture. Governmental support for the arts, it argued, was an accepted fact in the rest of the world. There would be a public cost attached to the programmes recommended, but 'if we in Canada want a more generous and better cultural fare we must pay for it.'⁴⁵

The Commission's single most significant recommendation was for the establishment of a Canada Council. This government agency would be a 'central bureau to serve as a clearing-house of information and to act as an intermediary' between the government and voluntary arts and cultural organisations. The Canada Council would foster cultural relations abroad, serve as Canada's national commission for UNESCO, and develop and administer a system of scholarships.⁴⁶ It would provide grants to Canadian arts organisations. It would encourage music, drama, and ballet by underwriting tours, commissioning music, and establishing awards, particularly for young people. And it would promote foreign tours by Canadian lecturers and performers and the exhibition abroad of Canadian arts.

In many of its other recommendations, the Commission exhibited a strongly academic perspective. It deplored the growing trend in society toward practical and

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development, *Report*, p. 381.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 370, 377.

professional training to the exclusion of a broader education. 'One of the functions of a university is to train persons for the liberal professions, but a liberal profession is "liberal" only because it includes education in the liberal arts.' One of the causes of the poor quality of education in Canada, argued the Commission, was 'the lack of good reading habits and a dearth of good books.'⁴⁷

One answer was to improve Canada's archives, to remedy 'the inadequacy of archival collections, local and national' and, in particular, 'the unsatisfactory condition of our public records.'⁴⁸ Thus the Commission believed that the maintenance of publicly funded archival repositories was critical to the culture and scholarship of the country; this belief permeated all the Commission's archival recommendations.

The Public Archives of Canada

Offering several recommendations on the development of the Public Archives of Canada, the Commission advocated a wide cultural role for the repository. In particular, the Commission recommended that the Archives expand, not reduce, its mandate to acquire private records. Care of government records was necessary, but not to the exclusion of private records care. The scholarly focus of the archives was highlighted: Canada's historical resources, both public and private, were to be protected for the benefit of historical scholarship. The public was to be made aware of the holdings of the Archives, and so the Commission also recommended an increase in dissemination and outreach programmes.

The Commission suggested that Brymner and Doughty had been forced by circumstance to establish broad policies and practices. 'It is not always easy,' the Commission claimed, 'to distinguish between a private and a public document it was this difficulty which led the first Dominion Archivist to add other historical documents to the public records.' The Commission acknowledged that the Archives could have limited its role to the care of government records. But it commended the Archives for

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 137, 163.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

undertaking 'valuable services performed by no other agency.' It praised the 'zeal and energy' of public servants who fortunately did not limit themselves to 'a narrow interpretation' of their duties. While the Commission agreed that national archives in other countries, including Great Britain and the United States, maintained public records and private records separately, it urged that 'the present useful arrangement in our Public Archives should not be altered.'⁴⁹

The Commission considered assistance with historical research to be an essential part of the archives' work. Copying and collecting records from foreign countries should continue, along with the care of public records; 'the two functions should continue and should be developed together.' The acquisition of more recent private records was encouraged. After all, in post-war Canada, a 'shortage of housing, frequent changes of residence, and the general insecurity of living conditions incline people to dispose of many family possessions, including archival material.' The Commission urged an expanded acquisition programme for records all across the country, 'whether in private hands or in institutions, public and private.'⁵⁰

The Commission recognised that it had long been government policy to retain public records for their historical value, but it acknowledged that this policy had never been fully carried out. Referring to the work of the Royal Commission of 1912, which had endeavoured to establish a public records programme, the Commission lamented that it had 'laboured almost if not altogether in vain.' Similarly, the Public Records Committee of 1945 did not have a sufficiently clear mandate to undertake any meaningful work. There were in government offices great quantities of public records, held in 'indiscriminate storage' and liable to 'covert destruction' or loss from fire or other hazards.⁵¹

The Commission recommended that the responsibilities of the Public Records Committee be more clearly defined. It should institute and supervise a systematic method

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 111, 115-16.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 117, 340-42.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 113, 336.

for the transfer and destruction of records. The Treasury Board was not to authorise destruction of any records without confirmation from this Committee. Every government department was to appoint a 'properly qualified records officer' to supervise the ongoing management of its records.⁵² The Commission did not elaborate on the specific qualifications for a records officer, although it did make separate recommendations on the qualifications of archivists.

The Commission presented several other recommendations for the reorganisation of the Public Archives. One concerned the acquisition of ministerial records, which often included both public and private records. It was appropriate, the Commission argued, for the Public Archives to acquire these records, to protect both the public and the private materials within them. Another recommendation was for a policy of liberal access to public records, subject to national security. The Commission did not conceal its opinion that scholars deserved more generous treatment than the general public.

It does indeed seem to us practicable to make a distinction between the degree of access to be granted to the public generally and that to be accorded to qualified students of history and public affairs The scholarly investigator should be given every possible countenance and aid. In this manner he will be enabled to make his full contribution to the unending task of public education and to the constant play of free public discussion, which are such essential parts of the democratic process.

Another recommendation was for the establishment of an Historical Manuscripts Commission, similar to the one operating in Britain. The object would be to conduct a survey across Canada to identify private papers and report on their condition and accessibility. Subsequent acquisition would be carried out by the Public Archives. The Commission also recommended the formation of a Board of Trustees to oversee the work of the Archives. The Board would 'stimulate public interest' in the Archives and would assist in 'finding and securing valuable material.' The Board's responsibilities would be limited to private records.⁵³

⁵² Ibid., pp. 337-38.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 117-18, 338-39.

The Commission discussed staffing at the Archives and the training of archivists. Critical of the existing staff of the Archives, it urged the Dominion Archivist to reorganise the Archives as necessary for 'efficiency and economy' and transfer to other departments 'such persons as are not fitted for archival work.'

It is neither possible nor desirable to fix any personal responsibility for an unsatisfactory situation which began many years ago, before the nature and importance of archival work was fully appreciated in this country We consider, however, that the interests of this important national institution require a reorganization of the staff as a necessary preliminary to the enlargement which must take place if the Archives is to perform its proper function.

The Commission advocated historical training as the necessary prerequisite to archival work. One recommendation was that federal and provincial archival repositories hire only people 'educated in history, familiar with the Canadian field, and trained in archival practice.' The Commission also called for an increase in staff at the Public Archives of Canada, to provide proper care to the large quantity of public records expected from federal departments. Adequate staffing was essential for the Archives to maintain its role as an 'historical centre.' The Commission encouraged the Public Archives to develop its own training programme. This would serve the wider archival community, not just the Archives' own staff; the Commission felt the Public Archives had a role in training archivists from other institutions.⁵⁴

The Role of Provincial Archives

Although the Massey Commission's primary focus was on federal programmes, it examined provincial archives as well. The relationship between local and national institutions, it felt, was necessarily close.

The local archival collection, whether provincial, municipal or private, is an essential factor in the effectiveness of the national institution; first, because of the source of materials which it contains; second, because through its functions it serves as an agent in gathering and preserving, no matter where, materials that might otherwise be destroyed; and third, because its existence and its services encourage scholarly historical

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 119, 339-40.

investigations which are one of the principal interests of the national institution.

The Commission reasoned that archival material should be 'channelled' to the repository where it would be most used, a decision which should be based primarily on the requirements of historical scholarship. The Commission recommended an active partnership between archives and historical societies. But although it encouraged historical societies in their work, the Commission considered government-funded and professionally staffed archival repositories to be essential to scholarly service. The historical society could only be the 'agent and auxiliary of a regularly constituted archival institution.'⁵⁵

A National Library

The Massey Commission had no hesitation in recommending the establishment of a national library. However, it was concerned about the scope of the Library's acquisition mandate. The Commission proposed a general collections policy that focused on all works published in Canada, all works by Canadians, and all works on a Canadian theme. Discussing the acquisition of non-book materials, the Commission argued that 'there are collectors' items which appear from time to time and which, if not then acquired, may later be unattainable. These collections may include original manuscripts of literary interest.'⁵⁶

In spite of its earlier recommendation for a broadened acquisition mandate for the Public Archives, the Commission recommended that the National Library have responsibility for literary manuscripts and archival records relating to music. The Library would also acquire 'such records, films and photographs as are considered necessary supplements to the printed collection of books, pamphlets and newspapers.'⁵⁷

The Commission did not encourage the transfer of other archival responsibilities to the new library. For example, it resisted suggestions that the Archives transfer its own

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 118-22.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 332.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

collection of maps and books to the Library. According to the Commission, 'a joint collection of public records and of other historical documents has admirably served the country's needs in the past, and ... should not be interfered with.'⁵⁸

The Commission saw the functions of the Archives and Library as 'essentially different.' The archivist was a custodian. He had 'a direct responsibility to the government, ... an indirect responsibility to the scholar, and a further responsibility to posterity.' The librarian's concern, on the other hand, was circulation, not preservation. The Commission argued that 'the Archivist should be an historian. For the Librarian, this qualification is not necessary and may even be undesirable.'⁵⁹

The Commission recommended that the Public Archives and National Library be maintained separately. Although Dominion Archivist Kaye Lamb was later given the job of establishing the new library, in addition to his archival tasks, the Commission urged that 'ultimately the National Library and Public Archives develop separately under independent heads, working in the close co-operation required by their related functions.'⁶⁰

In a related decision, the Commission recommended the establishment of a Canadian Historical Museum, 'whose principal duty would be to ensure that the history and development of Canadian people from earliest times to the present day are suitably illustrated by appropriate collections of the memorials of our past.' The Commission recommended that the historical artifact collections held by the Public Archives be transferred to the new Museum, which would also incorporate the holdings of the Canadian War Museum and artifacts held by the National Gallery. Commenting on the transfer of artifacts from the Archives, the Commission argued that 'while regretting the loss to the institution of so much that is picturesque and stimulating to the imagination,

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 344-45.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Lamb was appointed National Librarian in 1953 and held that position concurrently with his position as Dominion Archivist until January 1969, when he retired from both.

we think that these collections might serve the nation better as part of a National Historical Museum.’⁶¹

Conclusion

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences believed that the government had a major role to play in the cultural life of Canadians. Support and encouragement of the arts was ‘a state duty.’⁶² Public funding was essential to artistic, cultural, and scholarly development and to the sense of nationalism so urgently sought by Canadians. But while the government had long supported various cultural initiatives, it never before had such an explicit mandate, particularly as culture was seen as a provincial, not a federal, responsibility.

The recommendations of the Commission would lead to widespread public involvement with broadcasting, publishing, fine arts, drama, dance, and literature. In particular, the Canada Council would become the primary funding agency for cultural initiatives. Canadians no longer wanted to turn to American foundations and charities for money, but similar organisations were rare in Canada, with the exception of the Massey Foundation. And it was the leader of that foundation, Charles Vincent Massey, who led the Commission in recommending the establishment of a public source of funding for the arts.

In its recommendations on archives, the Massey Commission conceived of a style of archival management that was publicly funded, academic, and comprehensive. A broad archival programme was to be managed by well-qualified individuals, trained in historical scholarship and employed as public servants. Archival repositories were to acquire widely. Not just custodians of government records, public repositories were also responsible for the acquisition of all types of privately generated material. The establishment of a National Library was not seen as conflicting with the work of the Public Archives, in spite of the fact that the Library was expressly permitted to acquire

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 323-24, 343.

⁶² Ibid., p. 380.

private records relating to music or literature. The Archives was responsible for history; the Library for the arts and literature. To the Commission, there was no overlap in responsibility.

The recommendations of the Massey Commission turned Douglas Brymner's vague instructions and Arthur Doughty's extensive collections into Canadian archival policy. Archival repositories were cultural institutions. They existed for the benefit of scholarship and research. They were to be managed by academics, responsible for the historical records of the nation, whether public or private, documentary, photographic, or cartographic. The distinction between archives and manuscripts, increasingly discussed in the United States for example, was less obvious in Canada. Public records must be preserved for research purposes; this was a natural responsibility of public agencies. But private records were equally important to the study of Canada's history. This was also the duty of government, not the job of privately funded historical societies. But public repositories at the provincial and local level also had a role to play; the federal archives could not act alone as the great 'storehouse' of history envisioned by Brymner and Doughty.

For the next twenty years, archives across Canada built on the groundwork laid by the Massey Commission. They expanded their acquisition programmes, and they took responsibility for the care of government records. They also worked toward increasing their professional status, developing educational programmes and professional groups. More archival institutions were established, and archivists were able to communicate with each other and with foreign colleagues easily and more often.

As archivists began working together, they realised that the acquisition orientation of Canadian public repositories, particularly the national and provincial archives, did not mirror policies in other countries. At the same time, the growth in public bureaucracy, the concern for government efficiency, and the need for more sophisticated systems of records management pressed archivists to focus on the care of the records of their sponsor agencies. They had to reconcile the relationship between their service to scholarship and their responsibility for public records administration. In particular, the responsibility of

publicly funded archival agencies to acquire private records had to be rationalised. Canadian archivists continued to embrace the vision held by Brymner, by Doughty, and by the Royal Commission, that acquisition was an essential part of archival activity. Rather than reject acquisition, they developed it into the concept of ‘total archives.’

A CONCEPT OF 'TOTAL ARCHIVES':

RECONCILING ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT, 1952-1972

For the Public Archives of Canada to come to regard itself as a mere administrative convenience for the Government would be little short of a national disaster. If that were to come to pass, then God help the Archives; and God help Canadian history; and, in the long run, God help the Government too.

Col. C. P. Stacey¹

Introduction

The publication of the report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences signalled the start of a Canadian cultural revolution. Through new grant programmes at the Canada Council, the Humanities Research Council, and other agencies, the federal government supported a host of social and cultural activities, from art and ballet to literature and academic research. The Canada Council began in 1957 with government seed money of \$100 million.² Archival institutions were among the many beneficiaries of this increased public support for Canadian culture. In the twenty years following the publication of the Commission's report, archival institutions in Canada expanded to meet the Commission's challenge that they preserve the evidence of history for the benefit of scholarship and study. Archivists

¹ C.P. Stacey, 'The Public Archives of Canada at the End of its First Century,' *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers* (1972): 22.

² The Canada Council was established in 1957 using death duties received from the estates of two wealthy Maritime entrepreneurs. See J.L. Granatstein, 'Culture and Scholarship: The First Ten Years of the Canada Council,' *Canadian Historical Review* 65, 4 (December 1984): 441-74.

also heeded the Commission's recommendations to expand their educational and professional horizons. Training programmes were developed and professional communications formalised.

But archival repositories soon faced another challenge. The vast quantity of postwar government records prompted calls for improved management of government information. To cope with the paper boom, governments sought to streamline their operations and improve their efficiency. In 1960, the Royal Commission on Government Organization was struck to investigate ways to improve office practices, reduce costs, eliminate the excesses of patronage, and ensure the accountability of government departments.³ Records management was soon perceived as critical to effective organisational management within government.

Archivists responded to the call for records management in various ways. Some felt the additional responsibility improved the public profile of the archives, hitherto seen as scholarly at best, antiquarian at worst. Others felt the research focus of archival repositories would be diluted by increased involvement with records management. Some advocated the Jenkinsonian principle, that the appraisal of records, a key component of records management, should be left to administrators. Others saw a key role for archivists in appraisal, to ensure the preservation of a valuable historical record. Again the question arose, what was the purpose behind keeping archival records? And what was the role of the archivist in that process?

Archivists developed what became known as a distinctly Canadian solution. The 'total archives' concept defined archival records as encompassing both publicly and privately generated materials. These records were essential resources for historical scholarship. A functional records management programme would ensure the preservation of valuable public records, as well as improving the efficiency of government departments. But acquisition remained essential to secure those materials not already

³ Canadians were not alone in this quest for improvement of government systems. The Canadian Royal Commission on Government Organization was preceded in England by the Grigg Committee, established in 1952 to investigate record keeping systems, and in the United States by the Hoover Commission, established in 1953 to examine government systems in general.

within the realm of the public institution. Therefore, in spite of their increased responsibility for public records management, archives retained responsibility for the acquisition and care of private records. The purpose behind archival management was cultural. Records management was a necessary administrative function, but ultimately it was only a means to a cultural end.

The Development of an Archival Profession

By the time the Massey Commission was conducting its research, several provincial and some university archives had been established and there was a growing sense among archivists that they belonged to a distinct professional group. As early as 1949, W. Kaye Lamb had suggested to Lewis Thomas in Saskatchewan that ‘it would be all to the good if I could meet with the various provincial archivists and discuss with them certain matters of mutual interest.’⁴ Lamb had initiated a series of informal meetings with provincial archivists, often timed to coincide with meetings of the Canadian Historical Association.⁵ He and other archivists also communicated more regularly with their American colleagues, participating in the work of the Society of American Archivists, established in the 1930s.⁶ By the 1960s, there were as many as sixty established archival repositories in Canada, including government archives and university, library, and museum facilities, each in some form of contact with other repositories regionally, if not nationally.

At the general meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in June 1953, an Archives Committee was proposed, to represent the professional interests of archivists

4 W.K. Lamb, Dominion Archivist, to L.H. Thomas, Acting Provincial Archivist, Saskatchewan, 18 May 1949, National Archives of Canada Records, RG 37, National Archives of Canada, vol. 61, file 60-5-8. (Hereafter referred to as NAC Records and NAC.)

5 By 1970 these sessions had been formalised into an annual Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists meeting. See A. Ridge, ‘Canada,’ *The American Archivist* 33, 2 (July 1970): 367.

6 Americans had no hesitation to include their Canadian neighbours. In December 1940, for example, the American Association for State and Local History was formed, replacing the Conference of Historical Societies formed in 1904. The constitution of the Association ‘specifically includes Canada as well as the United States in the scope of its activity.’ A Canadian representative was included on the association’s council from the beginning. ‘The American Association for State and Local History,’ *Canadian Historical Review* 22, 1 (January 1941): 110-11.

within the Association. The Committee would encourage provincial governments to provide for the care of official documents and 'other historical manuscript collections,' including municipal records.⁷ It was also seen as 'a clearinghouse of information and suggestions'⁸ and a vehicle for standardising archival practice.⁹

In 1957 this Committee was reformed as an Archives Section, to 'provide opportunities for professional contact.'¹⁰ Its structure was initially quite loose, but its rapid growth led to confusion over its focus. (According to a member of the executive, the section had 'just growed, like Topsy.'¹¹) Some members felt the organisation should be more professionally oriented, encouraging the recognition of archivists as 'specialists in their own field.'¹² Others advocated a broad membership, preferring the participation of 'as many practising archivists in the country as possible -- whether they may be employed whole or part time.'¹³

Questions about the orientation of the Section highlighted the general lack of agreement about the nature of archival work. The distinction between archives and manuscripts seemed relatively clear in Europe and the United States. But in Canada, most public archives had responsibility for both public and private records, and both were called 'archives.' This caused confusion over the role of the archivist. Was he a curator or a keeper? One archivist stated frankly that 'in some respects we have not yet even decided on a definition of the job.'¹⁴ Another, discussing the potential membership of the archival section, commented that:

one of the big differences between archivists and modern record keepers is, I suspect, that the former are more likely to be University graduates than

7 Canadian Historical Association, Records, MG 28 I 4, NAC, 6 June 1953, vol. 2. (Hereafter referred to as CHA Records.)

8 Ibid., 3 September 1953, vol. 17, file 59: 'Correspondence 1961-1962.'

9 CHA, Archives Committee, Minutes, 2 June 1955, NAC Records, vol. 8, 60-8-CHA.

10 'Archives Section, Canadian Historical Association,' *The American Archivist* 38, 1 (March 1957): 91.

11 S. Guillaume to A.R. Turner, Vice Chair of Archives Section, 10 May 1963, CHA Records, vol. 17, File: 60, 'Correspondence, 1962-1964.'

12 H. Dempsey, Chair, to S. Guillaume, 21 May 1963, *ibid.*

13 A. Ridge, Open Letter, 23 July 1965, CHA Records, vol. 18, File: 62, 'Correspondence (Archives Section) 1965-1966.'

14 W. Naftel to A. Ridge, 7 March 1966, *ibid.*, vol. 18, file 63, 'Treasurer, Archives Section, Canadian Historical Association, Correspondence.'

the latter, and keepers seem to be diffident about coming into professional organizations The principal guide, however, should be that candidates are whole (or mainly whole) time engaged as *keepers* of archives: we should not become a forum for users or persons vaguely interested in old manuscripts.¹⁵

When the Archives Section finally adopted a constitution in 1967, it opted for a broad vision of archival activity, one which emphasised the historical nature of archival work.

The aims of the Section shall be to encourage and foster professional standards, procedures and practices among Canadian Archivists; to disseminate and distribute information relating to the Archives profession; to provide a common meeting ground for all types and classes of Archivists in Canada; and to provide leadership and guidance wherever needed in the fields of Archives administration, education and practice; to promote the preservation of historical documents and to encourage their scholarly use; and to encourage the publication of historical studies and documents as circumstances may permit.¹⁶

Theodore Schellenberg and Archival Theory

Many North American archivists turned to a new theorist, who offered an answer to the 'archives' versus 'manuscripts' conundrum. In his *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, published in 1956, Theodore Schellenberg provided a definition of archives more in keeping with the needs of research and scholarship.¹⁷ Archival records were

those records of any public or private institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archival institution.¹⁸

According to Schellenberg, records became archives *because* someone had chosen to keep them permanently. Further, to be archival they must reside in a repository dedicated to their preservation.

¹⁵ A. Ridge, Vice Chair, to A. Turner, Chair, 11 September 1964, *ibid.*, file 61, 'Correspondence July 1964 - June 1965.'

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, file 63, 'Treasurer, Archives Section, Canadian Historical Association, Correspondence.' Also published in *The Canadian Archivist* 1, 6 (1968): 22.

¹⁷ For a discussion of Schellenberg's ideas, see R.S. Stapleton, 'The Ideas of T.R. Schellenberg on the Appraisal, Arrangement, and Description of Archives,' (M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, August 1985.)

¹⁸ T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 16.

According to Schellenberg, any textual record resulting from an organised activity was an archival record. Manuscripts, on the other hand resulted from ‘a spontaneous expression of thought or feeling [they were] created in a haphazard, and not in a systematic manner.’ Archival repositories existed to care for the records of their sponsor agencies. Libraries should be responsible for manuscript materials. But regardless of the repository, the records were ultimately preserved for their cultural value to society, not for their administrative use to the creator. Records ‘must be preserved for another reason to be archives, and this reason is a cultural one. They are preserved for use by bodies other than those that created them, as well as by their creators.’ Unlike Jenkinson, who argued that some records could be considered archival from the moment of creation, Schellenberg argued that records only became archives once they were no longer current, and once someone, an archivist, had determined that they had lasting value. While Schellenberg encouraged the preservation of public records, claiming that they were ‘the grist of the archivist’s mill,’ he rejected Jenkinson’s principle of unbroken custody. Schellenberg claimed that ‘proof of an “unblemished line of responsible custodians” or of “unbroken custody” cannot be made a test of archival quality.’¹⁹

Many Canadians appreciated Schellenberg’s view of archives. It allowed for the acquisition of a variety of materials of historical worth, not just the records of sponsor agencies. But the distinction between archives and manuscripts did pose a small problem. For nearly one hundred years Canadians had made no administrative distinction between the care of records of governments or organisations and the records of individuals or families. One repository took care of both. And that repository was an archives, not a library or a special collections repository. As Norah Storey, at the Public Archives, noted: ‘no Canadian Archives finds any inconsistency in the fact that government-appointed Archivists are permitted, and in some cases required, to act as curators of manuscript depositories and repositories, as well as in their character of Archivists.’²⁰ In

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 14, 18, 26.

²⁰ NAC Records, February 1956, vol. 23, file 60-2-2, vol. 6.

Canada, archival records were defined by their existence in archival repositories, not by whether they had been created by a government, an organisation, or an individual.²¹

The Training of the Archivist

One reason archivists sought to clarify their role was to answer the call of the Massey Commission for improved archival training. Like other emerging professions, archivists were concerned about credentials and job security. There was a desire to raise the profile of archivists within their administrative environment.²² Archivists sought the professional recognition offered their library colleagues.

Librarians are trained and given certificates. Therefore, in the eyes of civil service commissions, they have a definite professional standing and their salaries are commensurate with such standing. Archivists, on the other hand, have only academic standing and, though this is usually superior to that of librarians, it does not carry the same weight with authorities.²³

But what was there to teach? One archivist suggested that 'the ultimate training is largely in service in nature.' Another agreed that the principles of archival management 'might be followed relatively informally.'²⁴ Many Canadians also took advantage of the training courses offered by the American University in Washington, D.C.²⁵ The Institute

²¹ Jenkinson himself rejected Schellenberg's definition, in large part because he argued that a definition could not, as Schellenberg claimed, be modified to suit local needs. The definition of archives must not be 'artificial and arbitrary.' In this same article Jenkinson indicated that his own definition of archives arose out of a practical need. Jenkinson said he 'ventured to propound a Definition of Archives or Records: partly because no one else seemed to have thought of doing so, at any rate in England, and partly because I was lecturing to the newly founded School of Librarianship at University College and needed one.' He stated that it was based on his own perceptions and 'fortified' by discussions with an archival colleague, C.G. Crump. H. Jenkinson, 'Roots,' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2, 4 (October 1961): 131-32.

²² A. Ridge, 'Chairman's Letter,' *Canadian Archivist* 1, 4 (1966): 16.

²³ G. Spragge to W. Ormsby, 28 January 1954, CHA Records, vol. 17, file 59, 'Correspondence 1961-1962.'

²⁴ W. Ireland to G. Spragge, 9 May 1955, *ibid.*

²⁵ The course was offered in co-operation with the National Archives and Records Service and the Maryland Hall of Records. See 'Archives, Libraries, and Museums,' *Canadian Historical Review* 29, 2 (June 1948): 228. In 1950, archivists George Spragge and William Ormsby attended the course, reporting back on its benefits to the Dominion Archivist. According to Ormsby, after 1950, one archivist was sent from the Public Archives each year. See G. Spragge, Archivist of Ontario, to W.K. Lamb, Dominion Archivist, 8 September 1950, Public Archives of Canada, Records, vol. 58, file 60-5-6, vol. 3. See also Ireland to Spragge, 9 May 1955, Canadian Historical Association, Records, vol. 17, file 59, 'Correspondence 1961-1962.' See also W.G. Ormsby, 'The Public Archives of Canada, 1948-1968,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 36-46.

on Records Management and the Institute on the Preservation and Administration of Archives, established in 1938, were initially directed by Solon J. Buck, at the time director of publications in the national archives.²⁶ By 1948 the programmes were directed by Ernst Posner, Professor of History and Archives Administration.²⁷ A variety of courses were offered. In records management, lecture topics included 'the problem of paper work in modern administration,' 'evaluation and scheduling of records,' and 'organization and procedure for records retirement.' In archives administration, topics included 'standards of records appraisal,' 'indexing,' and 'editing and publishing of archival material.' A number of specialised courses were offered, such as the 'administration of microfilming projects' and 'developments in the business archives field.'²⁸

While Canadians appreciated the training south of the border, they urged the development of a Canadian-made programme, as the Massey Commission had recommended. The Public Archives seemed the logical place. However, even though he had earlier lobbied in favour of training programmes at the Public Archives, Dominion Archivist Lamb now resisted the development of an institutional programme. He claimed that archival education was better offered through a university.²⁹ After all, virtually all archivists were university graduates, some had master's degrees, and some had Ph.D.'s or credit toward them.³⁰ It was only appropriate that they receive their archival education in a university environment. But in spite of Lamb's reticence, the Public Archives of Canada and the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association had by 1957 developed an archives course both for national archives staff and for other archivists. By

26 'Archives and Libraries,' *Canadian Historical Review* 19, 4 (December 1938): 462-63.

27 'Preliminary Annoucement of Archives Course,' *Canadian Historical Review* 29, 1 (March 1948): 118.

28 American University, 'Institutes on Records Management and Archives Administration, brochure, 1955, AO RG 17, S 15.

29 W.K. Lamb to D.M. Farr, Department of History, Carleton College, 30 July 1956, CHA Records, vol. 7, file 17.

30 W.K. Lamb to Peter Walne, Honorary Secretary, Society of Archivists, England, 28 May 1956, NAC Records, vol. 89, 60-8-SA; also Lamb to Walne, 9 July 1956, *ibid.*, vol. 23, file 60-2-2, vol. 6.

1961 the Archives was also offering a course in public records management.³¹ The course was initially offered at Carleton University but soon fell under the administration of the Public Archives.³² By 1962 Lamb confessed that 'I don't think there is much doubt that training programmes will be regular and routine things here in the near future.'³³

As the archives course developed, there was some concern about the lack of standards for potential students. One archivist claimed that excessive enrolment had the potential of 'cheapening' the diploma programme. There was a need to establish standards for admission. Others talked of certification and regulations for the profession.³⁴ But fears of a glut of poorly trained archivists did not come to pass. Registration in courses was not always high. As one archivist noted, 'perhaps our chief problem is the size and nature of Canada itself. We are large enough and sufficiently sophisticated enough to want some archivists, but not large enough or sufficiently mature to require a regular annually or biennially trained supply.'³⁵ A Canadian Historical Association report on archival training courses reiterated this sentiment, noting that 'it does not appear that there will be any great demand by our public archival institutions for trained archivists within the next few years.'³⁶

The Royal Commission on Government Organization

As archivists were concentrating on the development of the profession, historians, researchers, government officials, and politicians were still clamouring for better care of public records. In particular, politicians and public servants were agitating for the sensible destruction of unwanted records. The Second World War and postwar growth in bureaucracy had resulted in vast quantities of paper, and it was increasingly obvious that

31 Archives Course 1959, CHA Records, 1959, vol. 29; 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 25, 1 (January 1962): 146.

32 This is discussed briefly in E. Welch, 'Archival Education,' *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977): 49-59.

33 W.K. Lamb to R.H. Bahmer, Society of American Archivists, 5 February 1962, NAC Records, vol. 428, file 60-8-S.4.

34 Guillaume to Dempsey, 4 May 1964, CHA Records, vol. 17, file 60, 'Correspondence 1962-1964.'

35 J. Bovey, 'Chairman's Letter,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 1 (1970): 1.

36 D.H. Bocking and L.W. Rodwell, 'Report of the Sub-Committee on Archives Training Courses,' CHA Records, [1966], vol. 18, file 62.

no systems were in place to maintain the flow. The cost to government of poor records management was a major concern.³⁷ In 1955, Jack Pickersgill, a member of parliament, criticised the government's records systems, saying that 'there are some documents that are not even worth microfilming' and that many 'ought to be used for fuel.'³⁸ The Massey Commission had recommended that the federal Public Records Committee be strengthened and that provincial archival programmes be expanded.³⁹ Historians and archivists also urged that essential public records be preserved for their 'historical accountability.'⁴⁰

With the establishment of the Royal Commission on Government Organization in 1960, formal recognition was given to the administrative importance of, and cost of, managing public records and information. The Commission, popularly called the Glassco Commission after its chairman J. Grant Glassco, was struck 'to inquire into and report upon the organisation and methods of operation of the departments and agencies of the government of Canada.' The Commission was to examine the structure and practices of the government and to recommend ways to 'promote efficiency, economy and improved service in the despatch of public business.'⁴¹

The Glassco Commission was composed of three members: J. Grant Glassco, a prominent businessman and accountant from Toronto, and two other businessmen, Robert Watson Sellar of Ottawa and F. Eugene Therrien of Montreal. They in turn commissioned 176 specialists from industry, universities, and professions, with 21 civil servants to assist them. The Commission logged approximately 21,000 days of work, the equivalent, they reported, of about eighty man-years.⁴² The research was divided amongst a team of twenty-eight project officers, headed by Thomas F. Tyson, a Senior

37 Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1959, p.p. 1921-22.

38 Ibid., 1955, p. 6249.

39 Canada, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, *Report* (Ottawa, ON: King's Printer, 1951), pp. 119-20, 337-38.

40 J. Andreassen, 'Records of the Canadian National Railway,' *The Canadian Archivist* 1, 4 (1966): 8-10.

41 Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*, vol. 1 (Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer, 1963): p. 10. (Hereafter referred to as Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*.)

42 Ibid., vol. 1 p. 22.

Consultant with Urwick, Currie Limited, a Toronto-based firm of management consultants. Special mention was made in the final report of assistance and advice received from Herbert Hoover, former President of the United States and Chairman of the Hoover Commissions, the industry analyst Peter Drucker, later the author of several major works on government organisation, and several American and British senior government advisers.

Four project members were substantially responsible for the research into archives, libraries, and public records. They were John H. Archer, Legislative Librarian and Public Archivist, Government of Saskatchewan; Willard Ernest Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist of British Columbia; Paul A. Kohl, of the General Services Administration of the United States Government; and Colonel Charles Perry Stacey, University of Toronto, who had participated deeply in the research of the Massey Commission ten years earlier. Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States, and Everett O. Alldredge, Assistant Archivist of the United States, both served as consultants to the project. The Commission reported to a seven-member advisory committee, which included the Dominion Archivist, W. Kaye Lamb.

The Need for Government Reform

The Glassco Commission's final report was published in five volumes.⁴³ In its report, the Commission described in detail the vast expansion of government in the twentieth century. This expansion was, in fact, one of the reasons such a sweeping study was so essential. The civil service had increased nine-fold in less than fifty years, from 24,000 officers in 1913-14 to 216,000 in 1960. In that time, the nation's population had

⁴³ Volume 1 concerned *Management of the Public Service* and discussed management planning and financial, personnel, and paperwork and systems management issues. Volumes 2 and 3, *Supporting Services for Government* examined property management, purchasing and supplies, transportation and telecommunications, printing and publishing, contracting, legal services, economic and statistical services, and mechanisms for public information. Volume 3 also discussed *Services for the Public*, such as education, health, insurance, and postal services. Volume 4 analysed *Special Areas of Administration*. These includes the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Department of National Defence, the Department of External Affairs, Northern Affairs, and Scientific Research and Development. Volume 5, the final volume, addressed the organisation of the federal government.

grown only two and one half times. The Commission argued that ‘war, the threat of war and the aftermath of war have caused nearly forty per cent of the increase in personnel since 1939.’ Government spending had multiplied twelve times from 1939 to 1961. And government was not just growing bigger; it was becoming vastly more complex, with the addition of new and expanded social welfare programmes. The Canadian government had accepted a wider role not just in culture and the arts, but also in the provision of social, medical, welfare, and employment programmes.⁴⁴

With the growth of society, and the expansion of government’s responsibility for that society, the government’s administrative procedures were growing ever more complicated. After the Second World War, departments diversified their tasks and acquired more responsibility for decision making, sometimes overlapping with each other. Technology helped to improve communications in these areas, but the Commission expressed concern about the new ‘data processing centres’ which were expected to serve the government with ‘increasing versatility.’ The Commission also recognised that employer-employee relations were being affected by the changing employment environment. The public service now had to recognise stronger union control, more complex industrial relations, expanding social security programmes, and increasingly sophisticated job descriptions.⁴⁵

Throughout its report, the Glassco Commission argued that the best mechanism for accommodating administrative change in government would be through improved management of the public service. Departmental responsibilities needed to be formalised. Traditionally independent agencies needed centralised guidance and support. More important, senior administrators needed to have a ‘strong sense of purpose and a clear grasp of their responsibilities.’ Administration of the public service would be monitored by a system of checks and balances, to ensure integrity, accountability, and efficiency.⁴⁶

44 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 34-37.

45 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

46 Ibid., pp. 59-63.

Critical to improved public administration was the management of the government's paperwork. The Commission was concerned about the danger of superfluous information 'clogging the channels of communication and wasting public funds.' The Commission was 'highly critical' of existing paperwork systems, declaring that improvements would be 'challenging in the extreme.' It suggested that 'because no one has clear responsibility for this aspect of management, there is an appalling lack of understanding of present deficiencies and a general lack of concern about the money wastage.' It was also critical of 'empire-building' within government departments and of the chronic inattention to procedures or systems.⁴⁷

Records and Archives Management

The Glassco Commission devoted considerable space in its report to office systems and records management.⁴⁸ It found that one-twelfth of the government's budget was devoted to managing paper. Over 2,500,000 cubic feet of records were stored on government premises, with another 250,000 cubic feet added each year. The need to preserve records had produced a 'cumulative pressure' on existing systems and facilities. The Commission argued for an end to the 'haphazard control' of government records. It expressed a clear vision of the nature of records, a vision not in keeping with the traditional focus of Canadian archival repositories.

Records have a life cycle. They are conceived, brought into the world, live a more or less purposeful life in active files, tend to reproduce themselves, and in old age are decently cared for in dormant storage. When they have no further purpose to serve, they are cremated.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 481-82.

⁴⁸ Paul Kohl, C.P. Stacey, Wayne C. Grover, and John Archer analysed the work of the Public Archives, completing their report in November 1961. Kohl also investigated the organisation and management of the Public Records Centre and government microfilming practices, and he and Archer studied the organisation and services of the National Library. Willard Ireland, the provincial archivist in British Columbia, seems to have participated heavily in the writing of various of the reports. Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, Assignment Sheets, NAC, RG 33/46, vol. 94, file 64. For a report by Ireland see for example W.E. Ireland, 'Archives,' Report No. 1, Project No. 3, *ibid.*, vol. 151, File: 51.

⁴⁹ Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*, vol. 1, p. 484.

To manage records through this life cycle required an 'aggressive and positive approach' to the development of new and better methods. A savings of \$50 million could be gained from improved paperwork management, which would also promote increased effectiveness and better morale among civil servants. The Commission was critical of the mismanagement of information systems. Reports were wasteful; 'far too often,' the Commission criticised, 'a report is made simply to report that there is nothing to report.' Directives, manuals, and instructions were uncoordinated, leading to repetition in some areas and insufficient information in others. In one department, ten separate indexes were used to help identify records, and searches sometimes took up to three days. Over \$5 million could be saved just by simplifying mail and filing systems, and a more efficient system for producing and using forms could save over \$10 million. To address these deficiencies, the Commission advocated the development of a comprehensive plan for the management of public information.⁵⁰

The Role of the Public Archives of Canada

The Commission saw a critical role for the Public Archives in the improvement of information systems. Sound policies and practices were essential, and the Public Archives responsibility for these 'must be paramount.' The Archives must have control over all aspects of the preservation of and access to records, to ensure security and confidentiality. But before it could take this responsibility, the Archives must improve the management of the government records in its custody.⁵¹

Discussing the inadequate management of public records, the Commission cited the example of the Public Archives Records Centre, an interim records storage facility opened at Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, in April 1956. The Centre was popular with government and appeared to mark the transformation of the Public Archives into the long-awaited public record office.⁵² But while the Commission agreed that the Centre was

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 482-92.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 571-72.

⁵² The establishment of the Centre is discussed in W.G. Ormsby, 'The Public Archives of Canada, 1948-1968,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 36-46.

essential to good records management, it lamented that the facility was already completely full. Worse, existing records disposition schedules were out of date, and many records personnel were inadequately trained. It was essential for the Records Centre to establish adequate systems and to educate departments of its existence, in order to overcome the deficiencies in its management and to conquer 'departmental inertia.'⁵³

The Commission outlined its vision of the Records Centre's appropriate administrative responsibilities. These were:

To help departments schedule their current records systematically, transfer dormant records to the Records Centre, destroy worthless records, and transmit records of historical value to the Manuscript Division of the Public Archives.

To arrange for the destruction of records which have neither historic value nor continuing value to the department creating the record

To ensure the preservation of records which have either a continuing interest to the department or a future historical value to the Public Archives.

The Commission also called for the expansion of regional records centres across the country to service the sixty percent of government records not housed in Ottawa.⁵⁴

While the Glassco Commission urged improved efficiency in public records management, it did not renounce the Archives' responsibility for private records acquisition. Indeed, the Commission acknowledged that the repository's holdings were rich and varied and its expansive acquisition mandate had served Canadian society well.

The materials contained in the Public Archives are not all strictly archival and some of the functions still performed are not normally associated with archives. Nevertheless, Canada is immeasurably the richer for the effort made to preserve our heritage, particularly during the period when no other appropriate national institutions were in existence.

The Manuscript Division was a 'treasure-house for Canadian historical research,' which 'lifts the Public Archives beyond the limitations of a Public Records Office.' The

⁵³ Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*, vol. 1 pp. 562, 566.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 494, 567-71. Apparently the Commission also intended to recommend a public records act, but this did not end up in the final report. Writing to Archer to thank him for his work, Project Director Tyson wrote that 'I was disappointed that they did not spell out a public records act.' T.F. Tyson to Archer, 19 November 1962, John Archer Papers, University of Regina Archives, vol. 75-14.

Commission encouraged the Archives to expand, not reduce, the acquisition of private records, especially the records of Canadian businesses and film, broadcast, and sound recordings. Such acquisition would require additional resources, but it was a worthwhile public expense.

A national institution can hardly be expected to assume in totality the inherent responsibility of private enterprise. However, the national interest does require if the economic history of the nation is to be preserved, that the responsibility must be assumed on the national level if private industry is not prepared to do so.

The Commission made a number of administrative recommendations for the Public Archives. It suggested that the Archives' library holdings could be transferred to the National Library. However, the map collection should remain with the Archives, although the Commission acknowledged that this opened the door to duplication among different governmental agencies. There was concern that the work of the Picture Division could conflict with other national institutions, such as the National Gallery and the National Museum, but this problem could be overcome. After all, the Commission argued, actual custody was unimportant, 'providing there is considerable flexibility in inter-institution lending policies.' Publication of scholarly research works should not be the Archives' responsibility, but the Archives did have a responsibility to publish 'carefully selected and competently edited' documents. The acquisition and copying work still going on in London and Paris was 'an invaluable national service' which should continue. On the other hand, the Laurier House Museum would be better placed with another agency, such as the new Canadian Historical Museum, along with the Archives' numismatic and philatelic collections. The historical sections and archives housed in other government departments, such as those of the Armed Forces, Department of External Affairs, and Indian Affairs, should be reviewed with a view to transferring their records to the Public Archives.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*, vol. 1 pp. 574-83. C.P. Stacey objected strenuously to the suggestion that work at the Department of National Defence was not praised more highly in the Commission's report. He wrote a rebuttal to the report and protested the plan to transfer materials out of the offices of the Department of National Defence. See Archer Papers, vol. 75-14.

Libraries and Information Systems

As well as considering the Archives, the Commission examined the role of libraries in the administration of government. It argued that libraries were 'an essential service' for public administration.⁵⁶ The Commission was critical of the lack of recognition given to librarians as professionals in the public service. It recommended clarification of the purpose and nature of libraries, a review of salary scales, and more stringent entry qualifications for new employees. The Commission felt that joint administration of the National Library and Public Archives had worked well in the past, but it should not continue. There had been 'unprecedented' development in the fields of librarianship and archives which meant that each institution needed to manage its own mandates, staff, and resources.

The Commission also considered the use of 'automatic data processing' by government. The first computers had been programmed calculators, devised in the 1930s; by the 1960s a variety of computer technologies were appearing in government departments.⁵⁷ They were used almost exclusively for the management of statistical information rather than for word processing or financial management. As a result of the interest in computers, there had been a 375 per cent increase in data processing in government in nine years.⁵⁸

To manage these automated systems, the government had established an Interdepartmental Committee on Electronic Computers to coordinate the selection and training of personnel, to advise on computer installations, and to eliminate duplication and overlap in equipment purchases. According to the Glassco Commission, this

⁵⁶ Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*, vol. 1, pp. 561.

⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion of the origins and use of computers in bureaucracies, see J.R. Beniger, *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986). The origin of computers is discussed throughout, including on pp. 403-9. For a discussion of archival work with automation, see also T.E. Brown, 'The Evolution of an Appraisal Theory for Automated Records,' *Archival Informatics Newsletter* 1, 3 (Fall 1987). For a contemporary review, see J.T. Marshall, 'The Application of Computers in the Government of Canada,' *Canadian Public Administration* 6, 2 (June 1963): 148-55.

⁵⁸ Canada, Royal Commission on Government Organization, *Report*, vol. 1, p. 584.

Committee was essentially ineffective. It had not provided leadership and had not produced comprehensive policies or plans. Other government agencies advising on automation, such as the Management Analysis Division of the Civil Service Commission, were equally ineffective. As a result, departments often proceeded on their own initiative, and computer systems had been installed throughout government with minimal planning or co-ordination. The Commission recommended the establishment of an Administrative Improvement Division. It would advise on procedures throughout the civil service, including the use of data processing systems, and would authorise equipment purchases and co-ordinate the use of various technologies. The Commission warned against excessive reliance on new technologies. Computers were ‘servants, not masters’; any use of them must be based on a sound cost-benefit analysis.⁵⁹

Reconciling Archives and Records Management

With the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization, the government and the public were suddenly aware of the need for more efficient administration of government services. Information was an important government resource, one which required professional care. Records followed a life cycle, and records management was necessary to manage the records through all stages of that cycle. Systems were necessary to ensure the machinery of government ran smoothly. No longer could departments justify hiring unqualified personnel, implementing new processes without consultation, or acquiring new equipment without consultation.

As a result of the Commission’s recommendations, changes were made in the administration of the Public Archives. Between 1958 and 1968 the Archives’ staff expanded from 107 to 263, and its budget grew from \$500,000 to \$2.25 million. With the passage of a Public Records Order in 1966, the Archives took responsibility for a comprehensive records management programme, determining and enforcing records

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 484.

schedules and advising government on records systems. The Dominion Archivist presided over an Advisory Council on Public Records.

The Archives also expanded the acquisition of private records. In 1961, work began on a survey of archival institutions across Canada; the records identified were listed in the *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories*, published in 1968. In 1965, the Archives took responsibility for maintaining a register of graduate theses in progress in history and related disciplines. In 1967, the Archives moved into its new building at 395 Wellington Street, which it shared with the National Library.⁶⁰

The Canadian archival community saw that both the records management and acquisition functions of the Public Archives had been strengthened by the recommendations of the Glassco Commission. In particular, public responsibility for the preservation of private records had now been endorsed by not one but two Royal Commissions. Not only the Public Archives but also provincial archives accepted the legitimacy of a dual mandate.

Some archivists were concerned with the redefinition of archival work. Was the primary responsibility to serve public administration or to promote culture? Were archivists keepers of records or collectors of history? If archivists had responsibility for the preservation of their agency's records, rather than or as well as private records, were they also records managers? If so, then the task included the development of record schedules and the destruction of unwanted materials. How could archivists reconcile this institutional work with a scholarly role?

Some archivists were concerned that attention to the management of the records of their sponsor agencies would dilute their historical and scholarly focus. J.K. Johnson argued that, to be 'really useful,' an archivist must be 'thoroughly soaked in history.'⁶¹ Robert Ruigh commented that historical training was necessary for the archivist to 'anticipate the needs of that segment of the scholarly community with which he is most

⁶⁰ For more information on this period, see Ormsby, 'The Public Archives of Canada, 1948-1968.'

⁶¹ J.K. Johnson, 'The Archivist's Role in the Publication of Documents,' *The Canadian Archivist* 1, 5 (1967): 9.

intimately concerned.’⁶² Jay Atherton expressed concern that ‘the greatest danger to the dignity of the archivist is the tendency towards specialization, usually in the interests of efficiency.’⁶³ In the United States, National Archivist Wayne C. Grover saw the increasing relationship between archives and records management as ‘disturbing.’ Problems would arise from the archivist’s ‘lack of interest’ in the administration of current records.⁶⁴

Others argued that archivists must be aware of records management issues. An American archivist, Frank Evans, ‘emphatically’ endorsed a closer relationship between archivists and records managers.⁶⁵ Ernst Posner, who was educating many Canadian archivists at his Institute courses, claimed that the massive growth in the quantity of public records in the twentieth century forced archivists to change their view. ‘It has made the archivists conscious of being a living part of the administrative organization of their country and of constituting a specialized service.’⁶⁶ He argued that:

the management of records, from the time of their creation up to and including the time they are accessible in an archival agency is essentially one process and one problem for the solution of which the archivist and the records administrator must cooperate.⁶⁷

Thus he claimed that ‘not everybody who is interested in old books or has some background in scholarship is likely to be a good archivist.’⁶⁸ In Canada, Wilfred I. Smith, serving as Acting Dominion Archivist on Lamb’s retirement in November 1968, saw an economic benefit to records management.⁶⁹ Smith claimed that both the American and

⁶² R. Ruigh, ‘Aspects of Records Publication,’ *The Canadian Archivist* 1, 5 (1967): 4.

⁶³ J. Atherton, ‘Automation and the Dignity of the Archivist,’ *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 1 (1970): 56.

⁶⁴ W.C. Grover, ‘Archives: Society and Profession,’ *The American Archivist* 18, 1 (January 1955): 4.

⁶⁵ F.B. Evans, ‘Archivists and Records Managers: Variations on a Theme,’ *The American Archivist* 30, 1 (January 1967): 45.

⁶⁶ K. Munden, ed., *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967), pp. 33-34.

⁶⁷ Quoted in K.L. Trever, ‘The Organization and Status of Archival Training in the United States,’ *The American Archivist* 11, 2 (April 1948): 159.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Munden, ed., *Archives and the Public Interest*, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁹ With Lamb’s retirement, the task of joint administration of the Public Archives and National Library ended. Smith was appointed Dominion Archivist in 1972; Guy Sylvestre was appointed National Librarian in the same year. See R. Kingston, ‘The National Library of Canada: A Study in the Growth of a Nation,’ *Canadian Library Journal* 45, 3 (June 1988): 165-70.

Canadian national archives received funding for their archival work because of their 'integration with a profitable records management program.'⁷⁰

Hugh Taylor, who had worked as an archivist in England before immigrating to Canada, offered an outsider's view of the Canadian situation. British archivists cared for the public record, he said. They were 'more record keepers than historians, and many would hold that this is the true role of the archivist.' He argued that Canada's public archives were not established to 'keep' records but 'to accumulate the raw material of history One of the basic assumptions of this doctrine appears to be that Canadian archivists shall seek out information on the records of their country wherever they may be, and inform the student accordingly.' Taylor warned Canadian archivists that their situation would change. As record keeping took more of their time, 'less of it will be occupied in the search for historical material.'⁷¹

The Concept of 'Total Archives'

In 1972, in celebration of its centennial, the Public Archives of Canada published *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past*, a testimonial to its vast holdings. In his introduction to the book, Wilfred I. Smith, who had been appointed Dominion Archivist in 1970, offered a distinctly Canadian solution to the dilemma of dual archival responsibilities. He began by declaring that it was a 'basic obligation of every civilized community to preserve for posterity the records of its past.'

The conventional national archives is responsible primarily for records of the national government. Private papers have tended to be collected by national libraries or private institutions. For many years Canada has been unusual, if not unique, in that its Public Archives has developed as a storehouse of all types of material, from any source, recording the history of the country. This system has proved to be of immense value to researchers.

70 Smith to M. Rieger, Deputy Secretary General, ICA, 10 April 1970, NAC Records, vol. 428, File: 60-8 (ICA).

71 H.A. Taylor, 'Archives in Britain and Canada -- Impressions of an Immigrant,' *The Canadian Archivist* 1, 7 (1969): 23-25.

He proclaimed that the Public Archives' dual mandate was essential. It must be responsible 'not only for the reception of government records which have historical value but also for the collection of historical material of all kinds and from any source which can help in a significant way to reveal the truth about every aspect of Canadian life.' To Smith, this was 'the formal endorsement of Brymner's "noble dream".'⁷²

Smith dubbed this concept 'total archives.' He stressed that national archives should preserve all types of archival material; as well, they should integrate records management and microfilming services with their 'conventional' archival functions of acquisition, preservation, and access. Their job was to make available materials with 'permanent value as a cultural resource and national heritage.'⁷³ Related to this concept, Smith advocated 'total utilization of archives': the widest possible use of archival records, not just to provide evidence or protect rights, but 'for the benefit of the greatest possible number of persons.' Smith described this perception of a wide public use of archives as 'revolutionary,' arguing that traditional archival use was limited to 'a relatively small number of researchers.'⁷⁴

The total archives concept was presented at a meeting of the International Council on Archives in 1972. While Smith suggested that Canada presented the most prominent of the total archives concept, he was convinced the idea would become 'a model' for world developments in archives.⁷⁵

Following the Path of Total Archives

With the creation of a vision of total archives, and with the consequent endorsement of acquisition programmes by publicly funded archival repositories, many archivists not only developed or expanded their records management programmes but also renewed their acquisition efforts. At the Public Archives, a thematic acquisition

⁷² W.I. Smith, 'Introduction,' *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 9-10.

⁷³ Public Archives of Canada, *Annual Report, 1970-71* (Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer, 1972), p. 1.

⁷⁴ Smith, 'Introduction,' p. 20.

⁷⁵ Public Archives of Canada, *Annual Report, 1970-71*, p.1.

programme was developed, with increased attention to labour, business, sports, and cultural records.⁷⁶ As Smith wrote in a letter to a potential donor, explaining the Archives' 'more aggressive acquisition policy,' it was his intention 'to assemble at the Public Archives as extensive a collection as possible of the papers of persons known for their outstanding achievements in cultural fields. Thus, scholars would have the benefit of a large and representative collection of research material in one central location, together with superior research facilities.'⁷⁷

This 'systematic national acquisitions programme,' was designed to 'locate and acquire private manuscripts of national importance.'⁷⁸ Smith described two key aspects of the new programme. The first was to approach living persons and active associations 'to forestall much of the destruction of significant records which in the past has left many gaps in our history.'⁷⁹ The second initiative was to work cooperatively with the public and with various associations and groups to preserve archival records.⁸⁰

Other archives also expanded their scope. They were prompted not only by the national lead, but also by the expansion of university programmes, by improvements in recording technologies, and by the increasing availability of public funds for cultural activities. The expansion of academic research was becoming an important issue in Canadian universities, who saw a growing need for original sources for research.⁸¹ One archivist commented that after the Second World War 'the appetite for research material on the part of all educational institutions became insatiable'; as a result, 'the demands on archival institutions and on libraries in the coming decades will be unremitting.'⁸²

⁷⁶ Alan Ridge, 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 34, 3 (July 1971): 353-54.

⁷⁷ Smith to G. Lloyd, 11 April 1970, NAC, RG 37s, vol. 417, file 60-s-TI.

⁷⁸ W. I. Smith, 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 31, 4 (1968): 426. See also W.I. Smith, 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 33, 2 (April 1970): 252.

⁷⁹ Smith, 'Introduction,' p. 20.

⁸⁰ See R.S. Gordon, 'The Protocol of SNAP: Demarcation of Acquisition Fields,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 4 (1973): 48-54.

⁸¹ Bernard Ostry was an outspoken advocate of research in Canada. See his *Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences in Canada: A Report of the First Annual Survey of Canadian Research Problems and Needs in these Fields* (Ottawa, ON: The Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Social Science Research Council of Canada, 1962).

⁸² Canadian Historical Association, Archives Section, 'Conference Coverage,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 2 (1971): 28-29.

Queen's University, for example, actively sought private papers in the 'Canadian archival tradition.'⁸³ Efforts were made to widen the spectrum of acquisition beyond the records of politicians or explorers to include such diverse sectors of society as business, religion, art, or sports.⁸⁴

There were also called for the acquisition of media such as sound recordings or film. Oral history in particular was praised as 'a potential breakthrough to a new kind of history -- a true story of the events and their participants.'⁸⁵ Oral history was particularly valuable in documenting the history of the 'common man,' of people who did not traditionally leave written records. Total archives soon came to represent not only the care of both public and private records by public institutions but also the acquisition of records of any media, from any source. Further, under the banner of total archives, public repositories would represent the entire spectrum of Canadian life, from the rich and famous to the poor and obscure.

As each public repository endeavoured to establish its own total archives, overlap, confusion, and competition were inevitable. There were attempts to clarify the acquisition policies of various institutions. One archivist suggested that the only way to ensure cooperation was 'through continuing close personal contact and mutual trust.'⁸⁶ Others recognised that the burden for the preservation of Canada's history was being placed firmly on taxpayers' shoulders. One archivist claimed that 'the taxpayer is going to pay 90 to 100 percent of the bill for collecting, selecting, conserving and servicing the archives and historical manuscripts worth keeping in Canada.'⁸⁷ Others expressed concern that excessive attention to the care of government records would diminish the

⁸³ A. Ridge, 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 33, 3 (July 1970): 368.

⁸⁴ In an effort to work cooperatively to preserve private-sector records, a Business Archives Council of Canada was established to encourage the preservation of corporate records. One of the Council's founders was John Archer, who had participated in the work of the Royal Commission on Government Organization. J. Archer, 'Business Records: The Canadian Scene,' Archer Papers, vol. 4, series 80-35, no 19, p. 16.

⁸⁵ 'Oral Interviews: York University's Oral History Programme,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 2 (1971): 32.

⁸⁶ D.F. McOuat to W.I. Smith, 21 February 1969, Archives of Ontario Records, RG 17, Archives of Ontario, s 12, Box: 23T: PAC.

⁸⁷ Canadian Historical Association, Archives Section, 'Panel Discussion on Acquisitions Policy: Competition or Cooperation?,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 1 (1970): 36-39.

archivist's true role. The historian C.P. Stacey, in his address at the banquet celebrating the centennial of the Public Archives of Canada, was vehement in his belief that the Public Archives' administrative functions were 'valuable but nevertheless incidental.' Overattention to records management at the expense of acquisition would be a 'national disaster.'⁸⁸

Conclusion

From the 1950s to 1970s, Canadian archivists began to communicate with each other more formally; they established professional committees and associations, and they came to recognise various differences in the interpretation of their work. New training programmes offered an avenue for improving the status of the profession. But archivists still did not agree on the purpose and nature of archival work.

The Royal Commission on Government Organization, in its consideration of the organisation and structure of government, recognised the administrative importance of archives. Records management was essential to improve office systems and protect necessary government information. Records followed a life cycle, and they required protection throughout that cycle. Archivists could provide that protection. But the Commission also encouraged an expanded cultural focus for public repositories. Archives existed both to preserve the records of government and to acquire the records of society. Records management was important, but so was private records acquisition. Archivists in public repositories should ensure the protection of an even wider scope of historical materials, including media records such as film and sound recordings.

Archivists were torn by these dual responsibilities. If the archivist served as records manager, did his work become institutionally oriented rather than scholarly? But if he did not serve as records manager, who would ensure the protection of valuable institutional records? Archivists had difficulty reconciling their responsibility for public records, a responsibility that was forcing them to participate in the management of records

⁸⁸ Stacey, 'The Public Archives at the End of its First Century,' p. 22.

throughout their life cycle, with the preservation of private records, which focused on the acquisition of non-government records.

Records management was a problem facing many archivists in western countries. But Canadians had a larger concern. Canadians had not established separate institutions for private records care. Public archival agencies had responsibility for both archives and manuscripts, both public and private. This was confirmed by Commission recommendations; it was embodied in subsequent archival legislation. To relinquish that responsibility would be to deny the role assigned them by the government for over one hundred years.

Canadians rationalised their focus on private records acquisition by formulating the concept of total archives. This concept allowed archival repositories to serve their government sponsors by protecting public records and to serve society by acquiring private records. It allowed them to acquire all media of records, from all sectors of society. By 1972, one hundred years after Brymner had begun his own vaguely defined work, public archives in Canada were encompassing dual responsibilities for public and private records. The concept of total archives was refined and enlarged, eventually encompassing the preservation of public records, private records, media materials, the records of the influential, and the memories of the impoverished.

Canada's archival institutions continued down the path of total archives. Archivists continued their professional development. But in 1972, Canadian society's concern for its place in the scholarly world led to the establishment of yet another commission. This academically oriented commission was to examine and encourage the 'Canadianness' of Canadian studies. Its recommendations for archives would prompt the archival community to re-examine its understanding of the concept and relevance of total archives.

ARCHIVES, ACADEMIA, AND A PROFESSION

THE COMMISSION ON CANADIAN STUDIES

AND THE ROLE OF ARCHIVES, 1972-1979

Canadian archives are the foundation of Canadian studies.

*T.H.B. Symons*¹

Introduction

The 1970s saw many changes in Canadian society. Government grew more decentralised, as society's orientation, and many of its activities, devolved from federal to provincial or local management. 'Democratisation,' the idea that there should be more decision-making power at the local level, was growing in popularity. Concern for cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity led to a number of studies and developments that acknowledged a growing multiculturalism in Canadian society.

In the midst of these societal changes, the Association of Canadian Archivists was established in 1975, formally severing its connection with the Canadian Historical Association. The archival community continued to debate the nature of archival work. In particular, it struggled to rationalise the still pressing needs of institutional records management with a heightened desire to serve history and scholarship.

As universities grew in size and scope, Canadians saw academic research and scholarship as a way to promote an understanding of Canadian society and perhaps

¹ T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies* (Ottawa, ON: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975), vol. 2, p. 69.

promote national identity. The Commission on Canadian Studies was struck in 1972 to examine the state of teaching and research about Canada, especially its 'culture, social conditions, physical setting, or place in the world.'² It was struck out of concern for the high numbers of Canadian academics heading to the United States to teach and the rising number of non-Canadians, especially Americans, teaching at Canadian universities. The Commission did not originally plan to investigate archival management as part of its study. But as research proceeded the Commission began to see archival repositories as critical to the sustenance of academic research in Canada. Ultimately it offered a number of recommendations about the nature and direction of archival work, recommendations firmly based on an academic orientation.

For various reasons, archivists did not participate as heavily in the work of this Commission as they had with the Massey and Glassco Commissions. When the Commission's report was published, they did not accept all its recommendations. The Commission encouraged archival acquisition along regional and thematic lines, to suit the needs of scholarship. Its academically oriented proposals were not in keeping with the growing perception that archival repositories had a responsibility for the records of their sponsor agencies, not just the acquisition of private records. Nor did the recommendations accommodate the growing sense of decentralised responsibility for archives, as more and more municipal, regional, and local repositories emerged across the country. Rejecting many of the Commission's findings, the archival community sought a new vision of archives, one that acknowledged regional identities, recognised administrative requirements, and required the services of a trained profession.

Changes in Government

By the 1970s, the Canadian population had grown ever more ethnically diverse. Citizens of English and French origin had been joined by immigrants from Germany, China, Italy, Japan, and elsewhere. There was a continuing search for a stronger sense of

² Ibid., vol. 1, p. 5.

Canadian nationalism. Now, this nationalism had to be reconciled with the even greater distinctions between cultures, between provinces, and between languages. As Canada celebrated its national centennial in 1967 and a number of provincial centennials in the 1970s, there was a recognition of the country's multicultural nature. The government took the position that public funding was required to ensure that all races and societies received equal treatment. By the late 1970s, multiculturalism had become a deliberate Canadian policy, with the appointment of the first Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay, in 1977. Academics, for example, were exhorted to write histories that would 'reflect the diversity of Canadian aspirations for the Canadian future, not just a single-minded quest for nationhood.'³ In particular, French Canadians considered themselves more than just another ethnic group but a separate nation within the country. To this end they sought recognition of their own distinct identity. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism offered recommendations for supporting a French culture. Canada was gradually evolving into a 'mosaic' of distinct cultures, as opposed to the 'melting pot' of the United States.⁴

One particular area of growth was in universities, which received the majority of their funding from government sources. Academic studies flourished both in quantity and quality. Books in the traditional areas of political and economic history were joined by social and cultural studies, by ethnic histories, and by studies of various minority groups. There was also an expansion in professional education. As a university degree became the norm for younger Canadians, graduate education, particularly graduate professional education, became a more important requirement for employment.

The federal government had been funding social and cultural endeavours since the days of the Massey Commission in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1960s and 1970s, it could afford to be generous with its funds; like other western nations, Canada was enjoying a period of sustained economic growth. But in 1975, though still prosperous, the federal

³ H.J. Hanhan, 'Canadian History in the 1970s,' *Canadian Historical Review* 58, 1 (March 1977): 3.

⁴ See for example Roberto Perin, 'Clio as an Ethnic: The Third Force in Canadian Historiography,' *Canadian Historical Review* 64, 4 (December 1983): 441-67.

government experienced the first in a long series of budget deficits, as it fell into debt to sustain its extensive responsibilities. As the government found its widespread social obligations harder to afford, there were increased calls for the decentralisation of many public programmes. People in provinces remote from Ottawa were less and less satisfied with centralist control of economic or social programmes; they searched for stronger local management. Regional identities were not easily overcome. The federal government did not entirely object to this reorientation, as it sought to extricate itself from at least some of its rising costs. As one local politician noted in 1972:

We need real local government. We need it because there is no other way in which the government can become politically responsive. In no other way can it become an organ of the society rather than a manipulator of the society.⁵

This need for local control was considered particularly important in the cultural sphere. There was a new sense that cultural resources were often best managed at the local level. In 1972, for example, the Canadian government proclaimed a national museums policy that emphasised 'decentralization and democratization.' This policy meant that Canadian museums would work to distribute the cultural resources of the country through grants to regional or local institutions and through providing assistance with training and outreach. In this way, the government could stimulate the growth of local repositories.⁶

The field of archives was not exempt from restructuring and decentralisation. In 1974, Michael Swift, the chairman of the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association, noted that only three provinces and four cities in Canada had developed satisfactory records management programmes.⁷ There was a need for the local management of records, both public and private, both to ensure government records were well managed and to preserve private records of historical value.⁸ In this atmosphere of diffusion the number of repositories in Canada rose from the 60 or so in the 1950s to

⁵ K.D. Jaffary, 'The Role of the State in a Technological Society,' *Canadian Public Administration* 15, 3 (Fall 1972): 440.

⁶ K.M. Haworth, 'Local Archives: Responsibilities and Challenges for Archivists,' *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 31.

⁷ M. Swift, 'Chairman's Message,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 5 (1974): 3.

⁸ See, for example, Haworth, 'Local Archives.'

nearly 200 in the 1970s, as more regions established their own institutions. Virtually all provinces had initiated archival programmes, and work had begun in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. As well, a range of community, organisational, and institutional repositories were established.

A Professional Archival Association

While more archival repositories were appearing, the archival profession was also forging regional and national alliances. The Association of Canadian Archivists, established in 1975, was preceded by a number of provincial and regional initiatives. The Archival Association of Atlantic Canada had been formed in 1973 to 'promote professional standards' and 'provide members with a common meeting ground.'⁹ A Toronto Area Archivists Group had been formed at the same time to encourage professional standards and provide a forum for the discussion of archival problems.¹⁰ In the west, a Prairie Archivists' Conference was held periodically, with representatives from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and even Ontario. Issues considered ranged from salary levels to suppliers of archival materials to the establishment of training courses.¹¹ In British Columbia, twelve archivists formed a professional association to encourage the exchange of ideas and information, promote the care of historical records, and develop 'standards of professional competence.'¹²

The Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) was formally established on 3 June 1975 at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in Edmonton,

⁹ Archival Association of Atlantic Canada, 'Constitution,' Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA), Records, 1974, MG 28, I 340, NAC, vol. 1.

¹⁰ Toronto Area Archivists Group, 'Draft Constitution,' Constitutional Committee, 1974-1975, 8 August 1974, Canadian Historical Association (CHA) Records, 8 August 1974, MG 28, I 4, NAC, vol. 27.

¹¹ 'Archival Associations,' *The American Archivist* 38, 4 (October 1975): 615.

¹² Association of British Columbia Archivists, 'Draft Constitution,' CHA Records, 1974, vol. 27, Constitutional Committee, 1974-1975, Terms of Reference. The association called itself the Association of British Columbia Archivists but made clear that 'this title should not preclude inviting Brian Speirs of the Yukon Territory to be a member.' *Archives Bulletin* (January 1974): 11.

Alberta.¹³ The establishment of a national professional association out of a scholarly organisation prompted discussion of the relationship between scholarship and administration in archival work. Michael Swift urged his archival colleagues not to abandon their scholarly service. He suggested that academics would become 'disenchanted' if they were not provided with the types of records they demanded. At the same time, he recognised that records management was a necessary pursuit, 'distasteful as it may appear to be.' If archivists did not tackle the records management problem, appraisal decisions would be made by others with less understanding of the research importance of records. This would be 'to the great detriment of historical research in this country' and 'a serious blow to the growth and development of the archival profession.'¹⁴

Other archivists were equally concerned about the implications of separation from the Canadian Historical Association. Some desired a continued association with the Canadian Historical Association, which represented the key users of archival records.¹⁵ But others saw separation as a sign of the maturation of the archival profession.¹⁶ To them, the archival profession could not grow until it cut its ties with historians.¹⁷ Marion Beyea and Linda Johnson, editors of the Archives Section's *Bulletin*, stated that archivists were not 'historians or clerks.' Archivists were professionals, educated and trained to identify and preserve records of enduring value. To achieve these professional goals, archivists had to establish educational and professional standards.¹⁸ Archivists could not expect others to recognise them as professionals if they did not pursue professional standards.¹⁹

One of the Association's first concerns was to address the educational needs of archivists. The Association lamented the lack of standards for archival practice, and the

¹³ CHA, Archives Section, Committee of the Future, 'Report,' CHA Records, 4 June 1974, vol. 27, Committees 1973-1974.

¹⁴ M. Swift, 'Chairman's Message,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 5 (1974): 3-4.

¹⁵ A.W. Murdoch, 'Chairman's Message,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 4 (1973): 2.

¹⁶ I. Wilson, 'Editorial,' *Archives Bulletin* (April 1972): 4.

¹⁷ D.H. Bocking, 'Letters to the Editor,' *Archives Bulletin* (January 1974): 4.

¹⁸ M. Beyea and L. Johnson, 'Editorial,' *ibid.* (January 1974): 2.

¹⁹ L. Johnson, 'Editorial,' *ibid.* (October 1974): 2.

lack of professional control over the content or nature of archival courses offered.²⁰ The Public Archives of Canada course, in particular, was perceived as practical and prescriptive, not theoretical. It was very much a 'received knowledge,' 'how to' course.²¹ But it was the premier educational programme in the country; as such, it trained most of Canada's archivists.²²

Universities such as McGill, the University of Toronto, Dalhousie, and the University of British Columbia were beginning to add archival courses to their library school programmes.²³ A summer institute was developed at the University of Alberta.²⁴ But while archivists sought to establish a more comprehensive university programme, no university committed itself to developing a programme in archival management. This was in spite of the rapid growth in public spending on tertiary education. As one archivist noted, 'universities were just burgeoning everywhere -- all kinds of new programs and things -- and [archives] seemed to be sort of a forgotten area.'²⁵

The profession investigated the requirements for a well-qualified archivist. In a report on archival training, Harold Naugler, who had been in charge of the course at the Public Archives of Canada, argued that it was impossible to define the nature of the profession without identifying the educational qualifications of its members. An archivist working with textual records would need different training from a curator, a records manager, or a librarian. The profession's task would be to define the job of an archivist and then identify the training needed to equip people for that job.²⁶

In 1972, Hugh Taylor proposed three types of archival training. First would be a summer school in basic archival theory and practical techniques. This course would be

²⁰ D.H. Bocking to Grace Maurice, Secretary, CHA Archives Section, 19 December 1972, CHA Records, vol. 27, Correspondence 1972-1973.

²¹ Interview with Laurenda Daniells, 6 October 1993, transcript p. 2; interview with Jean Dryden, 2 November 1993.

²² This is discussed in the interview with Marcel Caya, 29 October 1993, transcript p. 20.

²³ CHA, Archives Section, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 6 June 1972, ACA Records, vol. 2, File: 2-2. See also ACA, 'A Guide to Canadian Archival Education,' ACA, Records, vol. 27, File: 27-7.

²⁴ A.D. Ridge, 'Archivist Institute -- Alberta,' *Archives Bulletin* (January 1974): 9.

²⁵ Interview with Sue Baptie, 27 September 1993, transcript pp. 4-5.

²⁶ H. Naugler, 'Views on Archival Training in Canada by the P.A.C. Sub-Committee of the Archives Section Training Committee,' CHA Records, 1974, vol. 28, Chairman's Files, 1973-1974.

useful for support staff and people already in the profession. Second would be a post-graduate credit course in archives administration, with an academic and philosophical perspective. This course might be expanded to a master's degree, with additional courses in librarianship and information management. Third would be a series of special courses and seminars in information. 'Interdisciplinary and ecumenical,' these courses would be attended by experienced professionals. Taylor urged that archival education not focus too heavily on the management of particular media or on the seemingly 'glamorous' world of acquisition. Further, archivists had to recognise the importance of new automation technologies and tackle the growing issue of information retrieval. Otherwise, he feared, they would end up as 'archival janitors.'²⁷

The Commission on Canadian Studies

Archival studies was only one of a vast array of professional and academic programmes being considered for university curricula across the country. Canadian studies was one area of particular growth. Academics were concerned about the future of Canadian studies; tertiary education was expanding throughout North America, and the influence of the United States was again felt. A stream of Canadians were leaving their universities for more lucrative positions in the United States; Americans were taking Canadian jobs. At the same time, American culture, in the form of books, films, music, and television, was streaming in equally steadily from the south. Canadian research, scholarship, and culture were still at risk from foreign influence.

The sustenance of Canadian culture led to the establishment of the Commission on Canadian Studies, to examine the role of universities.²⁸ The Commission, established by the Association of Canadian Universities and Colleges of Canada on 28 June 1972, was soon known as the Symons Commission after its chairman, Professor T.H.B. Symons, who was just completing his term as the founding president of Trent University in

²⁷ H.A. Taylor, 'Information Retrieval and the Training of the Archivist,' *The Canadian Archivist* 2, 3 (1972): 30-35.

²⁸ A. Ridge, 'Canada,' *The American Archivist* 36, 4 (1973): 584-86.

Ontario. The Commission did not see its work as ‘an exercise either in flag-waving or in cultural amnesia,’ but it did admit to harbouring a sense of ‘alarm’ about Canada’s sovereignty. It was determined to prove that ‘Canada provides a North American alternative to life under the Government of the United States.’²⁹

T.H.B. Symons began his Commission duties on 1 July 1972. The Commission’s staff included four research associates, ten research assistants, and three consultants. Its work was guided by an advisory panel of university scholars and others interested in Canadian studies. Representatives were appointed from each university in Canada to liaise with the Commission. The Commission had no executive powers, and its work was not commissioned by a specific government department or agency. Therefore it was at liberty to offer as broad a range of recommendations as it wished. These could apply to associations, universities, schools, or government departments, and even to individual citizens.

Underlying the work of the Commission was the belief that the academic community played a key role in the preservation of Canadian nationalism. Universities had a responsibility to promote Canadian studies. They had to secure and make available all necessary resource materials. Universities served not just academics but society as a whole; they were ‘the chief institutions’ of society, with fundamental social obligations.³⁰

The Symons Commission did not question the validity of Canadian studies as a distinct academic field. Instead, it concerned itself with determining whether Canadian universities were contributing adequately to that field. The mandate of the Commission was ‘to study, report, and make recommendations upon the state of teaching and research in various fields of study relating to Canada at Canadian universities.’ The Commission was to investigate a variety of issues, including the nature of Canadian studies programmes and courses, financial support for teaching and research in Canadian studies, and personnel and resource requirements. The Commission was also to identify ‘the location and extent of library holdings and other resource materials relevant to Canadian

²⁹ Symons, *To Know Ourselves*, vol. 1, pp. 2, 11-12, 20.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

studies, and access to these materials.’³¹ Notably, it was not specifically asked to examine the role of archival repositories, simply to consider the nature of research sources.³²

The Research of the Symons Commission

The Symons Commission held public hearings and conducted many formal and informal meetings at universities, colleges, and schools across the country. Public notices requesting input were placed in a variety of academic journals and university-related publications, such as *University Affairs*. Heads of learned societies were contacted, as were public associations and organisations with an interest in Canadian studies. In all, the Commission received over one thousand submissions from the public.

Because the Commission was not focusing on archival management in particular, it did not seek, nor did it receive, a great number of briefs or comments about archival administration. Those it did receive expounded on the importance of decentralising holdings and recognising the validity of local archival repositories. One of the most extensive submissions was prepared by the Dominion Archivist, Wilfred Smith, and the Assistant Dominion Archivist, Bernard Weilbrenner, on behalf of the Public Archives of Canada.

Smith and Weilbrenner examined the concept of total archives and explained the pivotal role of the Public Archives in its implementation. The job of the Archives, they argued, was to accumulate ‘as complete a collection as possible of original documents, or copies of original documents, of every kind and description, which will be useful sources for research into the development of the country.’ It was natural for the Archives to collect both official records and private documents. Private records were, after all, ‘the fabric of the cultural heritage of Canada.’ The Public Archives had a responsibility to

³¹ Ibid., p. 1.

³² See T. Eastwood, ‘Attempts at National Planning for Archives in Canada, 1975-1985,’ *The Public Historian*, 8, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 78-79. This information was also confirmed in the interview with Ian Wilson, 4 November 1993.

Canadian studies, one which required the acquisition and preservation of all types of records from all sources.³³

Smith and Weilbrenner acknowledged that Arthur Doughty's vision of a single archival treasure house based in Ottawa was no longer either possible or logical. They did not consider the Public Archives to be the only significant archival repository in Canada. It could no longer acquire records from all levels of government or from all parts of the country. Provincial and local institutions had a responsibility to care for documents of local interest.³⁴ The Public Archives would be the first to relinquish its hold over acquisition in order to ensure local archival needs were met.

To this end, Smith and Weilbrenner recommended the establishment of a network of regional archives. These regional repositories would work in liaison with or, better still, under the control of, provincial archives. They would be located in large towns, preferably towns with a university. After all, university faculty and students were the 'prime users' of archival records. Indeed, universities could administer many of these regional archives, provided they guaranteed equal access to all 'serious' researchers, academic or not.³⁵

In addition to the brief from the Public Archives, the Commission received submissions from regional groups interested in archival management. These groups reaffirmed the desire for decentralisation of archival responsibility. The Archival Association of the Atlantic Provinces, only a few months old, claimed that its very existence stemmed from a regional need to 'rationalize and develop the archival resources of Atlantic Canada.' There was increasing public pressure for access to archival resources, evidenced by the rising number of local museums and archival collections in the region. Academic research, government efficiency, and cultural development all required archival resources, in any medium. But the centralisation of holdings in federal and provincial repositories did not allow for the local preservation of resources. The

³³ Public Archives of Canada, *Brief to the Commission on Canadian Studies*, 28 February 1973 (Ottawa, ON: Public Archives of Canada, 1973), pp. 2-3.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 2, 12.

Association urged the Commission to recommend increased funding for local archives and improved training in archival management.³⁶

Memorial University of Newfoundland, a new university in a new and geographically isolated province, saw the diffusion of archival materials as a 'vital necessity.' Scholarship in the regions would suffer without expanded copying programmes and better access to national, provincial, and regional records. There was at present no equality of access. Academics based outside of Ottawa were discouraged from research because of the difficulty of getting to the resources. Financial support for travel, copying, and research was critical.³⁷

Many considered microfilm the best tool for the circulation of research materials. Microfilm was infinitely better than manual copying for fast, efficient, and error-free reproduction. The technology of microreproduction was opening new opportunities for the protection and diffusion of records. In its brief to the Symons Commission, the Canadian Library Association Microfilm Committee praised microfilm's convenient size and the economy of production. With microfilm, 'vast quantities' of records were suddenly available even to remote repositories with limited resources. This Committee urged that microfilming programmes be considered a central means of supporting Canadian studies.³⁸

The Recommendations of the Symons Commission

The Symons Commission's final report, organised into four volumes, included several recommendations about the role of archival repositories.³⁹ This was despite the

³⁶ Archival Association of Atlantic Provinces, 'Brief to the Commission on Canadian Studies, presented on behalf of the Archival Association of the Atlantic Provinces,' 5 December 1973, T.D. Regehr Papers, University of Saskatchewan Archives, MG 60, pp. 113-14.

³⁷ Memorial University of Newfoundland, 'Brief to the Commission on Canadian Studies,' 17 May 1973, Regehr Papers, p. 119.

³⁸ Canadian Library Association, Microfilm Committee, 'To the Commission on Canadian Studies from the Canadian Library Association, Microfilm Committee, A Brief submitted March 1973,' Regehr Papers, p. 87.

³⁹ Volume 1 included a statement on the rationale, academic framework, and philosophical foundation for Canadian studies. Volume 2 discussed Canadian studies abroad and in community colleges. It examined the nature of archival and audiovisual resources for Canadian studies. It also discussed the importance of private financing for academic studies. Volume 3 included three

fact that the Commission was never formally mandated to study archival institutions in depth. But the Commission had come to realise that archival resources were ‘the foundation of Canadian studies.’ This foundation was shaky; the Commission was critical of the ad hoc nature of archival development in Canada. It noted that ‘the holdings of many archival institutions are often haphazard, incomplete or composed of quite unrelated accumulations of documents.’ At the same time, archivists of earlier years were praised for ‘adopting a broad interpretation of their role’; they were commended for not limiting themselves to the custodianship of institutional records. The Commission encouraged an expansion of the acquisition orientation of public repositories, a recommendation reminiscent of those of the Massey and Glassco Commissions.⁴⁰ But the Symons Commission parted with tradition by recommending that universities, not government repositories, were the institutions best suited to acquire and care for archival records.

The first responsibility of university archival repositories, the Commission argued, was the management of their own records. The Commission urged the development of university records management programmes, encompassing a wide range of materials. The university’s archives should house not only the official records of the university but also audiovisual records such as tapes, films, and photographs, either produced by or relating to the university. As well, university archives should preserve the research data of resident scholars or faculty members. They should also acquire microform copies of records held in national or provincial archives. All these materials were ‘an essential source of support and information for the study of Canadian higher education.’⁴¹

chapters: the first on scholarly communication, the second on the nature of the Canadian university, and the third on the citizenship and academic qualifications of teachers and students at Canadian universities. Volume 4 included a chapter on Canadian studies and native peoples, a chapter on Canadian studies in elementary and secondary schools, and a chapter on publishing and Canadian studies. Also in Volume 4 was a chapter on library holdings and other resources for Canadian studies, and a chapter on the value of Canadian cultural property, including art, architecture, and artifacts, as resources for Canadian studies.

⁴⁰ Symons, *To Know Ourselves*, vol. 2, pp 69-74.

⁴¹ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 73-74.

The Commission then recommended that universities expand their scope. They should become *regional* archival repositories. The historical and research materials of a particular region should be concentrated in one university-based repository 'to avoid rivalries, duplication of effort and unnecessary expense.' The archives could borrow copies and originals of records from each other as needed. The placement of regional archives within universities was encouraged because, to draw virtually verbatim from the Public Archives' brief, 'university staff and students would be among the prime users of archival material.' The Commission agreed with the Public Archives' plea that these university-based regional repositories should be open to all 'serious' researchers, including the general public. In instances where regional archives had to be established outside of a university, 'close ties' should be established between the institutions.⁴²

Universities could make another significant contribution to the development of Canadian archives. They could develop graduate programmes to train professional archivists and conservators. The Commission was critical of existing training programmes. Although some programmes helped to meet basic training needs, many archives were staffed by individuals whose 'formal qualifications' were 'non-existent.' University-based education programmes would replace the previous apprenticeship system and ensure that the 'clerk custodian' was replaced by 'a trained and sophisticated expert.'⁴³

The Commission wrote from a strongly academic perspective. Universities would provide leadership, serving not just as the regional archives but as the channel through which archival resources could be disseminated across the country. By these means, universities could assist their communities to achieve the 'self-knowledge ... essential for health and growth in the lives of both individuals and societies.'⁴⁴ Archival records were necessary to serve scholarship. Academic progress depended on the expansion of archival repositories within a university environment.

⁴² Ibid., vol. 2, p. 72.

⁴³ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 74.

⁴⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 74.

The Symons Commission agreed that the Public Archives of Canada was an 'indispensable source for research.' However, to serve as keystone in this new decentralised system, that institution would have to make several changes. The legislation in force since 1912 had to be updated to allow for an expanded archival programme. A new building was required, with sufficient space for future growth, and preferably adjacent to but not part of the National Library. Adequate funding was also needed for the Archives' diffusion programme and for continuation of the *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories* and its companion, the *National Union Catalogue of Maps*, begun in the early 1970s.⁴⁵ The Archives should also produce 'a comprehensive national guide to all known archival resources in Canada,' whether in government repositories, businesses, or private hands. The National Film Archives, established in 1972, should be accorded permanent status within the Public Archives and should become the official repository for materials produced by public and private filmmakers, including the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.⁴⁶

The Commission also offered more general recommendations about archival management. Businesses and organisations should be encouraged to preserve their historical records and ensure public access to them. They should also establish records management and archival programmes, 'to be administered either internally or through the facilities of an established archival institution.' A 'Committee on the Development of Native Archival Resources,' should be created, with representatives from archives, academic institutions, native communities, government agencies, and relevant private organisations. A court of arbitration should be formed to deal with conflicting acquisition claims and reduce the competitive environment within archives. Newspapers should be better preserved, as they were 'primary sources' of historical information. And government departments should adopt an 'open door policy,' allowing freer access by researchers to their internal collections of books and records.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See B. Kidd, 'A Brief History of the National Map Collection at the Public Archives of Canada,' *Archivaria* 13 (Winter 1981-82): 3-22.

⁴⁶ Symons, *To Know Ourselves*, vol. 2, pp. 71, 75.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 71, 79, 131.

The Commission praised Canadian archivists for their work in organising themselves into regional associations. It also congratulated the Canadian Historical Association's Archives Section on its decision to separate into an independent society of Canadian archivists. The Commission encouraged a scholarly focus for this new association and urged that the relationship between archivists and historians be 'maintained and further cultivated.' It also encouraged archivists to cooperate with each other and with individuals and organisations 'throughout the Canadian academic community.'⁴⁸

The Commission made clear that the expanded role it envisioned for university archives, or any of the programmes recommended, could not be achieved without adequate financial support. Federal and provincial governments must provide increased resources for teaching and research in Canadian studies, including the expansion of Canada Council funding for research and bibliographic work. But funding for Canadian studies was not solely the responsibility of the public sector. The Commission stated that 'government by itself cannot, and indeed should not, bear the whole burden of assistance for the growing needs of Canadian studies. The active support of the private sector is also vital.' While Canadian universities traditionally received little private funding, the Commission argued that 'the money is there. It is up to the universities to go and get it.'⁴⁹

The Symons Commission's vision of archives, then, was all inclusive. All types of records, in all media, were to be preserved for their research use. Beyond original records, archival repositories should also be responsible for copies of records and for films, newspapers, and microfilm. The primary users of archival materials were considered university-based academics, although the general public was not to be excluded. The Commission felt that it was only sensible, therefore, that universities act as the focus of a regional archival programme. The custodians of archives were to be properly trained, through university education programmes. Both public and private

⁴⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 82.

⁴⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 134 B-D; vol. 2, pp. 107-8.

agencies had to provide financial support. Only in this way would the resource material critical to Canadian studies be preserved.

Archival Reaction to the Symons Commission Report

Archivists questioned the validity of the Symons Commission's academic orientation. Many archivists felt that the Commission had not acknowledged either the professionalism of archivists or the administrative nature of their work.⁵⁰ Archivists also criticised the Commission for making recommendations about archival management when it had not originally been mandated to consider the issue. The Commission, they said, had not undertaken sufficient research into archival issues to warrant such extensive recommendations. Nor had it lobbied the archival community for its opinions. Its suggestions were not wholly credible; certainly they were not particularly palatable. In the years following the publication of the Commission's report, both archivists and historians disputed the archival recommendations offered.

The new Association of Canadian Archivists was especially concerned about the recommendations of the Commission. The ACA's predecessor, the Archives Section, did not submit a brief to the Symons Commission. The ACA felt that, as a result, the Commission was under a misapprehension about the nature and purpose of archival repositories. The ACA chose to submit a brief after the publication of the Symons Commission's report.⁵¹

⁵⁰ See, for example, I. Wilson, 'The Symons Report and Archives: Reflections on a Century,' Presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, 6 June 1977, Consultative Group on Archives in Canada, Background Documentation, Regehr Papers, p. 43. See also ACA, 'The Symons Report from an Archival Perspective: A draft prepared by the A.C.A. Executive Council for discussion at the annual meeting in Fredericton,' May 1977, ACA, Records, vol. 7, File: 7-14, p. 3.

⁵¹ Various suggestions have been made concerning the reason the Archives Section did not submit a brief. One reason might have been that the Section was just reforming itself as the Association of Canadian Archivists and was not in a position to prepare a brief. Another more logical reason is that, as the Commission was not initially mandated to examine the purpose of archival institutions, archivists did not see it as relevant to their concerns. As will be seen, the lack of archival representation would later lead to further examination of the role of archives. Sources for this information include interviews with Ian Wilson, 4 November 1993, and Anne MacDermaid, 3 November 1993. Members of the ACA committee struck to prepare a brief included Kent Haworth of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Chris Petter of the University of Victoria's special collections and archives division, and Laurenda Daniells and George Brandak of

In this brief, the ACA outlined its objections to the Symons Commission Report. The Commission had failed to recognise the 'distinct identity' of archives. Archival records consisted of the administrative records of corporate entities such as governments or businesses. They were not 'grist for scholarly research,' existing solely for academic research use. The ACA criticised Symons' approach as 'inappropriate,' claiming that Hilary Jenkinson's vision of archives had been lost in the study. The primary obligation for the preservation of records rested with the organisation responsible for their creation. Legitimate motives existed for establishing archival repositories, far removed from the desire to serve scholarly research. As examples, the Association cited legal or fiscal requirements, administrative demands, or public relations and advertising needs. Archives, the ACA argued, should recognise the 'functional integrity' of records, rather than focus on cultural considerations.⁵²

The Commission was wrong to suggest that archival records could be retained according to thematic or regional categories. This library orientation was simply not suitable for archival management. Further, universities were not the most appropriate institutions for regional archival repositories. The ACA argued that government repositories, federal, provincial, and municipal archives, were better suited than universities to take responsibility for archival management.⁵³ Public archives, it claimed, had traditionally accepted responsibility for both the administrative records of the

the University of British Columbia's archives. Their terms of reference were to review the Symons Commission recommendations and prepare a brief in response, commenting specifically on the report on archives. The Committee's report was not accepted by the executive of the association, and another report was prepared for discussion at the 1977 annual general meeting. This second report was then revised and published as an occasional paper in November 1978 and as 'The Symons Report and Canadian Archives,' in *Archivaria* 11 (Winter 1980-81): 3-12.

⁵² ACA, 'The Symons Report and Canadian Archives,' pp. 3-12. In 1975, the American archivist Gerald Ham criticized this institutional perspective, which he felt focused on the records of sponsor agencies to the detriment of other records. Archivists who followed the teachings of Jenkinson risked being 'nothing more than a weathervane moved by the changing winds of historiography.' Ham condemned the narrowness of the approach, saying that if the archivist is 'passive, uninformed, with a limited view of what constitutes the archival record, the collections that he acquires will never hold up a mirror for mankind. And if we are not holding up that mirror, if we are not helping people understand the world they live in, and if this is not what archives is all about, then I do not know what it is we are doing that is all that important.' F. Gerald Ham, 'The Archival Edge,' *The American Archivist* 38 (January 1975).

⁵³ Eastwood, 'Attempts at National Planning for Archives in Canada,' p. 77.

government and the private records of individuals and corporations. There was no reason they could not expand their responsibilities and communications to establish an archival network, rather than shifting that responsibility to universities.

The ACA did not reject the idea of total archives. The concept had served society well and had resulted in remarkably diverse archival holdings. But the Association argued that both government repositories and private organisations must take better care of their own institutional records. They should no longer serve only to acquire records from outside of their own agency for the benefit of historical research. Rather, they must transform themselves from 'cultural agencies into functional archives.'⁵⁴

The Association was pleased with the Commission's recommendations for graduate education for archivists. Such education was necessary to the eventual creation of a distinct profession. However, while an initial association with a university history department seemed logical, certification of archivists was crucial to separating archival work from history.⁵⁵

In a presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1977, Ian Wilson, the provincial archivist of Saskatchewan, reflected on the Symons Commission report. Wilson suggested that the Commission was struggling with the central question archivists faced: what was the role of archives in Canadian society?⁵⁶ In his presentation, Wilson, like the ACA, took issue with the Commission's academic perspective, claiming that one of the problems for archivists was that scholars took archival repositories for granted. They saw them as treasure houses but did not acknowledge the work involved in acquiring and administering archival collections. Nor did they consider the effects of archival acquisition policies on the nature of the records available for historical analysis.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ ACA, 'The Symons Report and Canadian Archives,' p. 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁶ Wilson was particularly aware of the cultural role of archives in Canada, having completed a graduate thesis on the topic at Queen's University in 1973. I. Wilson, 'Shortt and Doughty: The Cultural Role of the Public Archives of Canada, 1904 to 1935,' M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1973.

⁵⁷ I. Wilson, 'The Symons Report and Archives: Reflections on a Century,' p. 38.

Wilson argued that it was wrong to determine acquisition jurisdictions on the basis of research needs. The impulse to acquire records, and to donate them, did not come from an interest in scholarship. Rather, it was based in a sense of, or a search for, a community identity. Archival agencies sought records relevant to their community of users, who were not always the same group as academic researchers. Donors had many personal reasons for selecting one archives over another. The donor's choice of repository was a 'highly personal' decision, one that could not, and should not, be dictated by the organisation of archival networks.⁵⁸

Wilson noted that Canadian archival work was characterised by the conflict between *respect des fonds*, the right of an organisation to retain all its records together, and the principle of territoriality, the need to keep records 'in the area to which they pertain.'⁵⁹ The archival community had not emphasised this principle of territoriality before; it was an idea growing out of the increasing sense of local needs and responsibilities. The regionalisation of archival repositories was an increasingly important theme in Canadian archives. To Wilson, it was natural for Canadian archives to have developed first nationally, then provincially, then locally.⁶⁰ Wilson also accepted as valid the concept of total archives and offered various options for its implementation. Satellite archives -- offshoots of central repositories -- were one means, and cooperative archives -- amalgams of several different archival groupings -- were another. The Symons Commission Report, while not fully representing archivists' roles, did articulate current trends in society. 'The challenge for us,' he concluded, 'is to recognize the trend, harness the energies of those interested in archives and lead them in a proper professional direction.'⁶¹

The historical community also took issue with the findings of the Symons Commission. But unlike archivists, historians feared that the development of local repositories would make records *less*, rather than *more*, accessible. While records of

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 43.

purely local interest could be left in local repositories, records of national significance must be more accessible, ideally in the Public Archives in Ottawa. Historians would accept decentralised archival management only if a rational acquisition policy were developed. Only in that way would researchers know where records could be found. Diffusion was also essential, so that copies of important records would be available in all major repositories across the country.⁶²

Archives after the Symons Commission

The Symons Commission prompted further self-analysis by archivists. Marion Beyea remarked that 'I cannot find a satisfactory statement or discussion by a Canadian archivist on the definition of an archives.'⁶³ Scott James also sought clarification. 'Many of us are guilty of assuming that what we do as archivists is what all archivists do,' he suggested. The problem, he felt, was that 'if others do not do what we do then ipso facto they are not really archivists.'⁶⁴

Gordon Dodds, the first president of the Association of Canadian Archivists, expressed a 'deep concern' about the role, status, and credibility of archivists in Canadian society.⁶⁵ The public had no clear understanding of the job of the archivist; this was shown by the stereotypical view presented by the Symons Commission. 'Anybody can call himself an archivist with little fear of professional retribution,' he lamented.⁶⁶ Dodds believed that the archivist's true role was confirmed in the 'most fundamental legal demands of society.'⁶⁷ The archivist must manage records from their creation; the archival repository must not be a 'dumping ground' removed from the business of records

⁶² Eastwood, 'Attempts at National Planning for Archives in Canada,' p. 78.

⁶³ M. Beyea, 'Archives and Religious Records,' *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977): 211.

⁶⁴ R.S. James, 'ACA Annual Meeting 1977: A Personal View,' *Archivaria* 5 (Winter 1977-78): 189.

⁶⁵ G. Dodds, Presidential Address, Association of Canadian Archivists, First Annual General Meeting, 2 June 1976, Laval University [Minutes], ACA Records, 2 June 1976, vol. 2, File: 2-13.

⁶⁶ G. Dodds, 'The World's Second Oldest Profession,' *Quill & Quire* 43, 6 (May 1977): 32.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

administration.⁶⁸ Indeed, Dodds, argued, no 'self-respecting' archivist could function without a records management programme. The keeper of the record, particularly the public record, must be responsible for all aspects of records administration. But archivists were constrained by their lack of focus. 'We have little or nothing,' he deplored, 'which draws us back to a touchstone of accepted knowledge in our field.'⁶⁹ The lack of an intellectual foundation led archivists to waver between the two poles of administration and academia.

Other archivists agreed with Dodds' call for a recognition of modern records requirements. Marion Beyea commented that without a functional records management programme, records would become static, limiting their value.⁷⁰ Scott James saw the total archives concept as 'an archival aberration' and complained that it had obscured the 'fundamental' work of the archivist. This work he defined as administering the 'permanently valuable records' of the sponsor agency. James also criticised the 'popular misconception' that the primary job of archival repositories was to preserve material for research use.⁷¹

Other archivists saw a research orientation as valid. Critical of the emphasis on systems and technology, Terry Cook asked if, while the image of archivist as historian was growing less popular, 'is not the pendulum now swinging too far in the opposite direction?'⁷² Historian T. D. Regehr felt archivists should continue to regard scholarship as their 'highest priority.'⁷³ Ian Wilson and Robert Gordon argued that it was right to consider archivists as historians.⁷⁴

At the Public Archives, Wilfred Smith, who had enunciated the total archives concept just a few years before, recognised that archivists were struggling with the

⁶⁸ G. Dodds, 'Back to Square One: Records Management Revisited,' *Archivaria* 1, 2 (Summer 1976): 89.

⁶⁹ G. Dodds, Letter to the Editor, Association of Canadian Archivists, *ACA Bulletin* 3, 2 (March 1978): pp. 6-8.

⁷⁰ Beyea, 'Archives and Religious Records,' p. 211.

⁷¹ James, 'ACA Annual Meeting 1977: A Personal View,' p. 189.

⁷² T. Cook, 'Clio: The Archivist's Muse?,' *Archivaria* 5 (Winter 1977-78): 199.

⁷³ T.D. Regehr, 'Do We Need New and Improved Archivists?,' *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 118.

⁷⁴ I. Wilson, 'Canadian University Archives,' *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 27; R. S. Gordon to Jay Atherton, 24 July 1978, ACA Records, vol. 4, File: 4-32.

distinction between bureaucratic requirements and historical and research needs. Archival appraisal and retention, he argued, should be based upon a recognition that the use of records in government is different from the use of them in an archival repository. Archivists must appreciate the difference between 'relatively short-term and long-term purposes' for keeping records. The archivist's focus must be on the long term.⁷⁵

Total Archives and Changing Technologies

In the mid-1970s, While the debate continued about the role of archives, the Public Archives was rapidly expanding its archival programmes, in a last flush of government largesse. Its Systematic National Acquisition Programme was expanded, in part in anticipation of the changing needs of historical researchers, in part to accommodate the products of new communications technologies.

The Public Archives acquisition plan divided private acquisitions into a variety of subject areas, including arts, business, labour, judicial, medical and scientific, military, public affairs, and sports. The National Ethnic Archives, for example, was to acquire records of ethnic groups in Canada. The head of the National Ethnic Archives acknowledged that there would be a cost attached to managing records in many languages, but he claimed that that was 'the price of seeking to reflect Canada's past fully and accurately.'⁷⁶

The Archives also grappled with the products of various communications technologies, such as film and sound recording equipment. A National Film, Television and Sound Archives, established in 1969, was actively acquiring moving image materials

⁷⁵ W.I. Smith, 'Archival Selection: A Canadian View,' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3, 6 (October 1967): 276. Smith reiterated this view many times, including in his article on 'The Public Archives of Canada,' where he stated that 'archives, unlike books, are not created to inform the public,' but 'those who create records in the course of normal activities usually are not aware of the potential secondary interests and uses of the information they contain.' *ARMA Quarterly* 7, 1 (January 1973), p. 25.

⁷⁶ W. Neutell, 'National Ethnic Archives,' *Canadian Library Journal* 33, 5 (October 1976): 436.

and sound recordings, including broadcasts and oral histories. The Archives also expanded the acquisition of photographic collections and architectural records.⁷⁷

The most challenging new technology was the computer, and electronic data processing records were 'the latest newcomer to the family of archival media.'⁷⁸ As early as 1956, Theodore Schellenberg had acknowledged the existence of machine-readable records. However, he argued that they should not be preserved, owing to the need for special, expensive equipment.⁷⁹ By the 1970s, there was a growing sense that machine-readable records might have archival value, but archivists were not sure how to cope with the new medium.⁸⁰ In 1971, Charles Dollar acknowledged that historians were increasingly using quantitative analysis as part of their research strategies, and that agencies creating machine-readable records had to take into account the research needs of scholars conducting computer-aided research.⁸¹ In 1978, in his pioneering analysis of the appraisal of machine-readable records, Dollar argued that the appraisal of automated records differed significantly from that for paper-based records. The differences between these two types of records would become more pronounced as technology evolved. In order to maintain preservation costs at a reasonable level, the research potential of the records had to be confirmed to justify their acquisition.⁸²

Dominion Archivist Smith confirmed that archivists had responsibility for 'all archival material regardless of form.' Machine-readable records were simply another relevant media worthy of preservation. Archivists had first considered preserving computer-generated information as paper printouts, but Smith acknowledged that

⁷⁷ See the Public Archives of Canada, *Public Archives Report 1972-1973* (1974), esp. p. 15. See also M.D. Swift, 'The Canadian Archival Scene in the 1970s: Current Developments and Trends,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 49.

⁷⁸ Public Archives of Canada, *Report 1972-1973* (1974), p. 13.

⁷⁹ T.R. Schellenberg, 'The Appraisal of Modern Public Records,' *Bulletins of the National Archives* 8 (October 1956): 254-59. Cited in C.A. Bailey, 'Archival Theory and Machine Readable Records: Some Problems and Issues,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988.

⁸⁰ One early article on the subject was B. Fisher, 'Byproducts of Computer Processing,' *The American Archivist* 32, 3 (July 1969): 215-23.

⁸¹ C. Dollar, 'Documentation of Machine Readable Records and Research: A Historian's View,' *Prologue* 3, 1 (Spring 1971): 27-31.

⁸² C. Dollar, 'Appraising Machine-Readable Records,' *The American Archivist* 41 (October 1978): 423-30.

machine-readable records were now a 'normal' archival medium. He urged archivists not to abdicate their responsibility to these records simply because they were unfamiliar with the technology.⁸³ Michael Swift noted that 'the promotion of these newer fields of activity has given substance to the concept of 'total archives.' Further, he expressed hope that the national archives focus would 'force' other archives in the country to examine their own work and to 'begin thinking about and discussing proposals for the development of national programs on a cooperative basis.'⁸⁴

In fact, the Public Archives was itself experiencing difficulty with the administration of the total archives concept, and particularly with the expansion of new media-based divisions. Terry Cook, writing in *Archivaria* in 1979, argued that the increased attention to records in specific media was endangering the archival principle of provenance. Concentration on the form was at the expense of the 'functional unity of the original record.' As various administrative units of the national archives took responsibility for a particular medium, such as visual or electronic records, the archival fonds as a whole was being divided. Its integrity could be lost. The division was also hindering scholarship. Researchers were required to work through a multitude of archival systems in order to find the information they sought.⁸⁵ Cook argued for only two units of administration in an archives: public or institutional records and private collections. Media materials should naturally fall within those groupings.

Cook's perspective was criticised by his colleague at the Public Archives, Andrew Birrell, who considered Cook's enunciation of the principle of provenance to be 'tyrannical and fundamentalist.'⁸⁶ Other Public Archives representatives joined the

⁸³ W.I. Smith, 'Broad Horizons: Opportunities for Archivists,' *The American Archivist* 37, 1 (January 1974): 6-8. Not all archivists agreed; in 1979, David Bearman, later a major advocate of electronic records management and the use of automation technologies, suggested that 'it is extremely unlikely that many archives will purchase computers, even minicomputers.' D. Bearman, 'Automated Access to Archival Information,' quoted in F.J. Stielow, 'The Impact of Information Technology on Archival Theory: A Discourse on an Automation Pedagogy,' *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 34, 1 (Winter 1993): 54.

⁸⁴ M.D. Swift, 'The Canadian Archival Scene in the 1970s: Current Developments and Trends,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 48-49.

⁸⁵ T. Cook, 'The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on "Total Archives",' *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80): 144-45.

⁸⁶ A. Birrell, 'The Tyranny of Tradition,' *Archivaria* 10 (Spring 1980): 252.

debate, expressing concern for 'media solitudes' and suggesting that the concept of total archives could lead to the establishment of separate media archives. Without responsibility for the archival unit as a whole, archivists would not have the contextual understanding of the records within which to conduct their work.⁸⁷

This controversy among Public Archives staff forced a revision of the concept of total archives. Wilfred Smith had defined total archives as the preservation of records in all media and from all sources, whether public or private. This new debate focused attention only on the media aspect of total archives. The term 'total archives' was soon perceived by many to refer largely, if not solely, to archival responsibility for the totality of media materials, including photographs, maps, films, and sound recordings.

Calls for Coordination

Debates about media materials and about acquisition versus institutional management led archivists to reconsider their wide-ranging acquisition programmes. Few archivists advocated abandoning acquisition. Instead, there was a general call for an end to unplanned collecting. A national acquisition programme was needed.⁸⁸ Some advocated centralising acquisition at the Public Archives of Canada, which had already developed its own systematic acquisition programme.⁸⁹ Others argued against these 'centralist tendencies.'⁹⁰ Ian Wilson held firm to his view that many institutions would not conform to an 'orderly division of collecting areas.' Repositories, he claimed, evolved as individuals recognised the value of historical materials and the need to preserve them 'in a society otherwise bereft of the tradition, inclination or facilities to care for such documents.'⁹¹ Hugh Taylor was in favour of a systematic programme but he expanded the boundaries of archival responsibility even further. He encouraged archivists

⁸⁷ E.J. Dick, J. Gagné, J. Langham, R. Lohead, J. Moreau, 'Total Archives Come Apart,' *Archivaria* (Winter 1980-81): 227.

⁸⁸ J. Knight, 'Architectural Records and Archives in Canada: Toward a National Programme,' *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 68.

⁸⁹ J. Lambert, 'But What is Caesar's and What is God's? Toward a Religious Archives Programme for the Public Archives of Canada,' *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 46.

⁹⁰ Haworth, 'Local Archives: Responsibilities and Challenges for Archivists,' p. 29.

⁹¹ I. Wilson, 'Canadian University Archives,' *Archivaria* 3 (Winter 1976-77): 24-25.

to establish documentary photography and oral history programmes. He argued that, in oral societies, the work of the remembrancer was all important. The keeper of the records had an equally important role that required preservation of a wide spectrum of information.⁹² By the end of the 1970s, prompted by the recommendations of the Symons Commission and its own discussions, the archival community recognised the need for a more coordinated approach to its work.

Conclusion

In the 1970s, Canadian society was growing more decentralised. Local government became more important, as regional identities strengthened, and the federal and provincial governments began to diffuse responsibility to the local level, meeting societal pressure for a grass roots control of public programmes. These programmes included archival management, and so there was an inevitable expansion in the number and scope of local archival repositories. At the same time the federal government was continuing its high level of public spending. Among other consequences, this led to a blossoming of university programmes in the 1970s. As universities expanded and graduate programmes emerged, professions grew more sophisticated. The archival profession sought to formalise its own education and training and to strengthen itself through the creation of provincial and national archival associations.

The academic community was concerned about the expansion of education, and particularly about the influence of the United States on the field of Canadian studies. The Symons Commission promoted the development of a strong Canadian university environment, which would encourage Canadian studies and secure the materials needed to document Canadian society. As part of its study the Commission ended up offering a variety of recommendations for archives, which encouraged the management of archival resources by universities and emphasised the scholarly value of archival records.

⁹² H.A. Taylor, 'Review, Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*,' *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979-80): 235.

The Symons Commission did not provide a definitive answer to the question of the role of archival institutions. Indeed, it served more to agitate the archival community than calm it. Archivists rejected its academic vision of archives. They were concerned about decentralisation, about territoriality, about the responsibilities of local archives, and about the need for institutional archival management. Large centralist institutions like the Public Archives, provincial archives, or university archives could not by themselves serve the needs of a vast range of records creators and records users. The archival community also had to adapt to the realities of new technologies, such as audiovisual and electronic equipment, which were creating new types of records. To cope, the archival community had to improve its understanding of the field, and it had to devise new, cooperative approaches to the preservation of archival records.

The findings of the Symons Commission, and the formation of the Association of Canadian Archivists, led to an increased introspection on the part of archivists. This resulted, inevitably, in yet another Canadian commission. But unlike its predecessors, the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives was established *by* archivists and *for* archivists.

REDEFINING TOTAL ARCHIVES:

THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON CANADIAN ARCHIVES, 1978-1982

Although archival materials may not in their beginnings have been ‘drawn up in the interest of or for the information of posterity,’ posterity does nevertheless have a strong claim to make.

*Consultative Group on Canadian Archives*¹

Introduction

The Consultative Group on Canadian Archives was established in 1978 to find ways to coordinate the myriad archival activities appearing across the country. The study of the Consultative Group on Canadian archives was ‘the first attempt to present a full portrait of the [archival] system, warts and all.’² The Group examined the state of the archival community in Canada and offered recommendations for the development of an ‘archival system’: a coordinated approach to national archival management.

The Consultative Group’s vision of an archival system was based on a subtle but significant redefinition of the concept of total archives. The Consultative Group argued that the creators of records, not government archives, carried the primary responsibility in society for preserving their records. The archival community needed to urge records

¹ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, *Canadian Archives: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada by the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives* (Ottawa, ON: SSHRCC, 1980), p. 14. (Hereafter referred to as Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*.)

² Ibid., pp. 8-9.

creators to meet these obligations. However, the Group did not advocate that records must be kept *only* by their creators or their legitimate successors, with unbroken custody. It argued that, while institutions, governments, and businesses had a responsibility to care for their own records, publicly funded institutions had an equal responsibility to ensure these records were protected for society. Public repositories should continue to acquire private records if their creators could not care for them. Further, public funding should be used to establish an archival network to promote communication and cooperation among existing and new archival repositories, both public and private. This network would form the basis of the archival system.

The Group recognised the legitimate responsibility of creating agencies to care for their own records. It also acknowledged the validity of the existence of a wide range of archival repositories. The Group retained the essence of the total archives concept, confirming a continuing public duty for the preservation of society's archival records. However, it recognised the need to change the mechanisms for exercising that obligation, to meet the changing realities of modern society. The archival community reacted positively to this argument, in spite of the fact that it would lead to further decentralisation of archival responsibility, away from major public archives and toward provincial, regional, and local repositories.

The Formation of the Consultative Group

The Consultative Group on Canadian Archives was established in January 1978. Its creation was a direct result of criticism of the Symons Commission's report three years earlier. Reviewing the criticisms brought by the archival community, T.H.B. Symons, chair of the Symons Commission, acknowledged that his examination of archives had been superficial. He agreed that a more detailed study was needed and he urged the Canada Council to mount an in-depth examination of Canadian archives.³ The Council

³ T. Eastwood, 'Attempts at National Planning for Archives in Canada, 1975-1985,' *The Public Historian* 8, 3 (Summer 1986): 78-79. See also T.H.B. Symons, 'Archives and Canadian Studies,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83), esp. p. 65.

approved the request, assigning the Consultative Group 'a broad mandate to report on the state of the archival system.'⁴ The Group's task was ill-defined -- indeed, the term 'archival system' itself was never defined -- and there was little time in which to accomplish the work. The Group was to meet six times over one calendar year, from January 1978 to January 1979, and produce a final report in 1980.

Both archivists and historians served on the Consultative Group. The chairman was Ian Wilson, the provincial archivist of Saskatchewan. Other archivists included Jay Atherton, the director of the Records Management Branch at the Public Archives of Canada; Sue Baptie, the archivist at the City of Vancouver Archives; Marcel Caya, the archivist at McGill University; and R.J. Morgan, the director of the Beaton Institute of Cape Breton Studies at the College of Cape Breton. Historians included T.D. Regehr, from the University of Saskatchewan; David Gagan, from McMaster University; and Jacques Mathieu, from Laval University. The final member was Leonard E. Boyle, a professor of diplomatic in the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto.

The Consultative Group solicited information from archivists across the country. It received 73 written briefs and heard from many archivists at open meetings. As well, the Group distributed 321 questionnaires to archives, museums, organisations, and other agencies that might house archival records, receiving 185 responses.⁵ The information gathered was discussed by the Group at its six committee meetings.

In its investigations, the Group considered four major archival concerns. The first was the definition of archives and the relationship between the cultural and administrative functions of archival repositories. In relation to this the Group considered the validity of the total archives concept. The second concern was the growth in regional archives and the effect of decentralisation on archival work. The third issue was the level and nature of funding available for archives in Canada. The fourth was the need for archival education.

⁴ Eastwood, 'Attempts at National Planning for Archives in Canada, 1975-1985,' p. 79.

⁵ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, p. 9.

Seeking a Definition of Archives

From its first meeting the Group spent considerable time seeking a definition of archives. Members of the Group, and the archival community in general, divided into two fairly distinct groups. The first advocated Hilary Jenkinson's vision that archival records were best preserved by their sponsor agency. However, this group altered Jenkinson's focus markedly. Jenkinson had exhorted archivists not to take responsibility for the appraisal and selection of records. This group, on the other hand, argued that archivists *must* be involved in records management, in order to protect the records. The second group urged a cultural appreciation of the purpose behind preserving archival records. While they did not deny the value of records management, they considered it a means to an end. In particular, they continued to promote the acquisition of private records by public repositories, considering that to be an essential part of the preservation of society's documentary memory.

Information Management

Marcel Caya, a member of the Consultative Group, wrote a discussion paper on 'Modern Archives: An Integrated Approach to Information Management.' He related archives to modern information systems, arguing that the vision of archives as the preserve of historians was long past. Archivists, Caya complained, focused too much on records as cultural property and not enough on records as information.⁶

Caya favoured Hilary Jenkinson's definition of archives, as documents drawn up or used in the course of administrative or executive transactions. However, Caya did not agree with Jenkinson's tenet that the administrator, not the archivist, should be responsible for the appraisal and selection of archival records. To Caya, archivists were, and should be, responsible for the management of recorded information throughout its life, from its creation to its ultimate disposition. Only by taking charge of records management could archivists link their work to the ongoing operations of the institution.

⁶ Canada Council, Report of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives in Canada, 18 February 1978, pp. 10-12. Copy obtained privately.

As well as improving information management systems, particularly automated systems, a focus on the life cycle would ensure that archival work received adequate funding. It would become an 'indispensable item' in the budget.⁷

Those archivists who agreed with Jenkinson's principle that archival records were natural accumulations, not artificial collections, adapted Jenkinson's ideas to incorporate the modern needs of records management.⁸ While Jenkinson had believed that the selection of records for retention was best done by an administrator, these archivists saw records management as the 'sine qua non' of an effective archival repository.⁹ Marion Beyea and Kent Haworth claimed that it was the responsibility of the creating agency to maintain and preserve its records. The archivist had a central and appropriate role to play in that records management process. Any reorganisation of records for research purposes would 'frustrate the historian,' 'impair the satisfactory execution of administrative decisions,' and 'result in a debased record.'¹⁰

These archivists argued that the evolution of the total archives concept was the result of Canada's disregard for an archival principle that had been in practice in Europe since the nineteenth century. North American archivists, they claimed, had ignored basic archival principles, justifying their idiosyncratic practice by calling it 'total archives.' This had led organisations and businesses to surrender their records to publicly funded institutions rather than taking responsibility themselves. As a result, private organisations did not maintain their own records, and public archival institutions lacked appropriate systems and strategies.¹¹

⁷ M. Caya, 'Modern Archives: An Integrated Approach to Information Management,' Consultative Group Background Documentation, Third Meeting, T.D. Regehr Papers, University of Saskatchewan Archives, MG 60, pp. 8-15, 23-32. See also Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives in Canada, 16 January 1978. Copy obtained privately.

⁸ M. Beyea, General Synod Archivist, Anglican Church of Canada, and K. Haworth, Archivist, Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, Brief to the Consultative Group, 14 July 1978, Regehr Papers, p. 2.

⁹ A.W. Murdoch, Acting Provincial Archivist, Archives of Ontario, Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 'Ontario Archives Brief to Canada Council Consultative Group on Canadian Archives,' 10 April 1978, Regehr Papers, p. 2.

¹⁰ Beyea and Haworth, Brief to the Consultative Group, pp. 2-3.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 3.

Further, there was unnecessary competition for records, and resources were wasted in the quest for acquisitions. As Chris Petter, the University of Victoria's archivist, argued, the promotion of total archives was leading to 'total war' among institutions. Depicting a 'cloak and dagger' scenario, he feared that the competition among archivists was alarming the very public they aimed to serve.¹²

Total archives also stifled the development of archival professionals, because entry into the profession required a background in history, not an understanding of archival practice. Worst of all, the Canadian public had no awareness of the nature and role of archives, because archival activity had been centralised in a few major repositories, not throughout the governments, businesses, or organisations responsible for the creation of the records.¹³ As the archivist at the City of Toronto Archives, R. Scott James, told the Consultative Group, 'the greatest single obstacle' to the development of an archival profession in Canada was this misunderstanding, by the public and by archivists, of the true nature of archival activity.¹⁴

A Cultural Perspective

Many archivists did not accept this institutional interpretation of archival responsibilities. Leonard Boyle and Robert Morgan suggested that the archivist is 'not merely responsible ... for the preservation of institutional and personal records, but for the preservation of the culture within his territory.'¹⁵ Hugh Taylor felt archivists should maintain a more holistic vision of their work; they had a role to play in the preservation of a wide range of materials.¹⁶ Jacques Mathieu argued that archives could not in fact be defined by their purpose, 'for their ultimate purpose, insofar as it is definable, overlaps and is shared with almost any institution, collection, discipline, or activity focused on the

¹² C. Petter, Archivist Librarian, University of Victoria, Brief to the Consultative Group, 3 April 1978, Regehr Papers.

¹³ Beyea and Haworth, Brief to the Consultative Group, pp. 4-6.

¹⁴ R. James, City Archivist, Toronto, 'Brief on Archives in Canada,' 13 June 1978, Regehr Papers, p. 1.

¹⁵ Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives.

¹⁶ H.A. Taylor, Provincial Archivist, Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia, Brief to the Consultative Group, 28 April 1978, Regehr Papers, pp. 273-74.

past.’¹⁷ Mathieu emphasised this historical orientation in archival work, defining ‘archivistics’ as:

a science wherein the principles and methods are directed towards protecting (acquiring), conserving, classifying, inventorying and making accessible non-published (or unique) documents which can be said to shed light on the past.¹⁸

Seeking a Balance

After considering these differing points of view, the Consultative Group sought a balanced definition of archives that accommodated both the administrative and historical ideals. It defended the idea that a total archives repository acquired ‘all material, i.e. of all media and all sources, which pertained to its *specific purpose*.’ However, ‘total archives’ was not acceptable if it meant that a repository defined its mandate in non-specific terms -- or did not define a mandate at all -- and then sought and acquired material of all media from all sources. To avoid this unplanned acquisition and consequent rivalry, institutions needed precise and well-defined policies.¹⁹

The Consultative Group opted for a broad vision of archival work. Archival materials were defined as ‘unpublished or unique materials of a documentary nature (including film, tape and photograph) which may shed light on the past.’ Archival records did not exist solely for academic research. But neither did they exist solely for institutional use. Jenkinson’s definition was too restrictive. Archival records served a wide range of people, mostly through intermediaries such as historians, biographers, political scientists, or journalists. Administrative efficiency was not the only reason for maintaining an archival programme.²⁰

The Group defined archival repositories in relation to their key functions: appraising, acquiring, and selecting records; conserving, arranging, and describing them;

¹⁷ Canada Council, Report of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives.

¹⁸ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Third Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives in Canada, 14 April 1978. Copy obtained privately.

¹⁹ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, 26 October 1978, pp. 3-5. Copy obtained privately.

²⁰ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, pp. 13-17.

and making them accessible. It avoided designating a particular type of repository as the 'only true archives.' Instead, it encouraged cooperation among various institutions, all of whom needed to understand a common archival process and to agree on basic archival principles.²¹

In spite of its claim that archival programmes served more than institutional necessity, the Group was strongly in favour of records management. It was the key to any 'systematic preservation' of the nation's records. By establishing and maintaining records management programmes, archivists could maintain the link between historical and current records. Because many records had no long-term value, and only a small number were of enduring significance, the archivist had to intervene in the records management process to ensure that appropriate appraisal decisions were made. By participating in records management, archivists would realise 'the full potential of the archival process: of preserving the recorded social memory.'²²

The Decentralisation of Archival Control

A second issue the Consultative Group examined was the rise in regional archival repositories. The Group saw a danger in the proliferation of institutions across the country. It recognised that 'few archives have been established in response to a clear plan.' Most, large and small, had been established through the efforts of 'a dedicated enthusiast.' The Group's survey of archives had shown that the number of archival institutions in the country had grown remarkably, from 17 in 1900 to nearly 200 by 1978, and increase of over 1000 per cent.²³ There was no denying the reality of regional identities in the wake of this plethora of community, regional, and institutional repositories. The Group felt that these smaller archives, many funded in an ad hoc fashion, were particularly susceptible to cuts and closure.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., p. 18

²² Ibid., pp. 86-87, 105.

²³ Ibid., pp. 29, 37.

²⁴ Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 6-7.

Further, these institutions lacked leadership or guidance. Most had been set up ‘in the absence of a school of archival science ... of basic manuals or texts ... of any program of federal or provincial assistance, or even of tax concessions.’²⁵ Local communities saw a need for a local archival institution, and to establish one, they drew on funds from a variety of sources. But without archival standards or institutional coordination there could be no cooperative planning among these wide-ranging repositories. Efforts were duplicated, resources wasted, and records endangered.²⁶ The concern for decentralised development was echoed by the historians on the Consultative Group who argued that funds were better spent ensuring research materials were kept in one central location.

Some archivists suggested to the Consultative Group that the proliferation of archives came out of the burgeoning heritage movement. It was a testimony to a ‘sincere and growing desire of Canadians to preserve the fast fading image of their heritage.’²⁷ This heritage impulse had to be accepted as reality, even though it meant the development of local archives and the possibility that archival material might be lost or cared for in less than ideal circumstances.²⁸ The Group agreed that this principle of ‘territoriality’ had to be respected. Records should be kept close to the area of creation: ‘it is to this area that they rightfully belong, and to these people that they should be most readily available.’²⁹ Taylor urged archivists to support the ‘necessary development of local archives,’ lamenting the centralisation of the 1960s and 1970s.³⁰ He proposed that professional archivists work together to plan a national strategy for the preservation of documentary materials. The Public Archives could then provide grants to assist with preservation of records, limiting its own acquisition to the records of organisations or people whose activities ‘transcend provinces and regions.’³¹

²⁵ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, p. 59.

²⁶ Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 6-7.

²⁷ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, p. 59.

²⁸ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Open Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives in Canada, 30 May 1978, p. 4. Copy obtained privately.

²⁹ Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, p. 10.

³⁰ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Open Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, p. 4.

³¹ Taylor, Brief to the Consultative Group, p. 3.

The Group decried the trend of thematic archives, arguing that such institutions took records out of their proper context and placed them in an artificial environment.³² The problem with thematic or media-based archives, argued the Group, was that they led archivists to ignore the principles of *respect des fonds*, by not retaining records together as a unit of one creating agency. Further, a thematic orientation was difficult, if not impossible, to link with a functioning records management programme.³³

Thus the Consultative Group soundly rejected the Symons proposal that universities serve as the nation's primary archival institutions. The risk was too great that a subject-oriented emphasis would overshadow legitimate archival principles. While two members of the Group, Ian Wilson and Marcel Caya, both university archivists, did feel that university archives had a 'leadership role to play,' the general consensus was that university repositories appeared to be haphazard and disorganised. They were unable to care for their own records, much less acquire other materials.³⁴ As Stan Hanson at the University of Saskatchewan Archives argued, the Symons Commission had ignored the existence and value of local archives. These institutions, he felt, should not be dismissed as 'unimportant, non-viable, mismanaged and ill-equipped archival aberrations.' Rather, it was university archives that were poorly managed. 'Few touts,' he claimed, 'would lay money on the ability of Canadian universities to play so dominant a role in the Canadian archival programme.'³⁵

Funding for Archives

Examining the issue of funding, the Consultative Group acknowledged that the money available for archival work was 'insignificant by any standard.'³⁶ While the National Museums programme allocated \$9 million to museums across the country, there

³² Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Third Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 9-10.

³³ Murdoch, 'Ontario Archives Brief,' p. 4.

³⁴ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, pp. 5-6. See also, Canada Council, Report of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 12-13.

³⁵ S.D. Hanson, Brief to the Consultative Group, June 1978, Regehr Papers.

³⁶ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, p. 59.

was no single government funding agency for archival work.³⁷ Many archivists urged the Canada Council to become the key federal funding agency responsible for archives.³⁸

While the Canada Council acknowledged responsibility for the initial formation of the Consultative Group, it argued that it did not have the mandate to fund continuing professional education or to support archival research.³⁹ It also claimed it could not participate in the maintenance of actual archival programmes as the cost was prohibitively high. In particular, Council funding could not be used for national and other public repositories, because they already received direct government funding for their operations.⁴⁰

Another option was to establish a new organisation, similar to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in the United States, to assist with the management of archival repositories across the country.⁴¹ Beyea and Haworth urged the establishment of an Archival Consultative Body, which would formulate criteria to permit private institutions to obtain financial assistance and professional advice.⁴² These funds would be available only for non-profit organisations with adequate standards of practice. These archivists also promoted the creation of tax credits to encourage businesses to run their own archival programmes.

Some archivists were critical of the concept of national funding programmes. Money was better distributed through the provinces, they felt. While the Dominion Archivist, Wilfred Smith, indicated that the Public Archives had been considering seeking legislation empowering it to provide grants itself, he feared that 'a central source could ... ruin provincial efforts to establish and enforce standards.'⁴³ Some archivists urged the Consultative Group to condemn 'careless funding' by lottery groups or community

³⁷ W.I. Smith, Dominion Archivist, Brief to the Consultative Group, 23 May 1978, Regehr Papers, pp. 3-4.

³⁸ Canada Council, Report of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 15.

³⁹ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Open Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 1-2.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Beyea and Haworth, Brief to the Consultative Group, p. 14.

⁴³ Smith to Wilson, 23 May 1978.

granting agencies.⁴⁴ Beyea and Haworth were particularly critical of the use of government funds to perpetuate acquisition work that distorted the life cycle principle of archival management. Funding agencies should not be permitted to support programmes that ‘duplicate or compete’ with other archives’ work or that result in the fragmentation of records.⁴⁵

The Archival Profession

As well as considering funding, the Consultative Group examined the state of the archival profession, particularly the best method of archival education.⁴⁶ There was a need for pre-appointment education but also a ‘very serious need’ to educate working archivists.⁴⁷ There was general support for an academic programme in archival studies, leading to a professional qualification as archivist. Coupled with that was a call for the certification of archivists. Certified archivists would lend credibility to themselves and to the field of archives.⁴⁸

Some archivists argued that pre-appointment education for archivists was not as important as the experience gleaned through apprenticeship.⁴⁹ There were suggestions that an archival institution such as the Public Archives could provide both graduate programmes and continuing education.⁵⁰ Stan Hanson saw graduate education as a future goal but not an ‘immediate imperative’; more important was the provision of short courses in specialised topics.⁵¹ The Association of British Columbia Archivists advocated training sessions to improve the abilities of the ‘jack-of-all-trades in the local

⁴⁴ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Open Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁵ Beyea and Haworth, Brief to the Consultative Group, p. 15.

⁴⁶ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, Report of the Fourth Meeting, 31 May 1978. Copy obtained privately.

⁴⁷ Canada Council, Report of the First Meeting of the Consultative Group on Archives, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸ Beyea and Haworth, Brief to the Consultative Group, p. 12.

⁴⁹ Murdoch, ‘Ontario Archives Brief,’ p. 5.

⁵⁰ R.C. Purse, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Brief to the Consultative Group, 12 May 1978, Regehr Papers, p. 2. See also A. MacDermaid, Brief to the Consultative Group, *ibid*.

⁵¹ Hanson, Brief to the Consultative Group.

repositories.⁵² Others wanted funding to allow archivists to travel to conferences and workshops.⁵³ Some criticised the Public Archives of Canada's training course, arguing that financial support should instead go to universities, which existed to provide educational opportunities.⁵⁴ Terry Eastwood, at the time the president of the Association of Canadian Archivists, felt that a suitable graduate programme could be placed in many departments in a university, not just in a history department.⁵⁵ He also argued that, while archives had long been allied to scholarship, little support had been provided for archivists to conduct academic research into archival issues.⁵⁶

A Redefinition of Total Archives: The Recommendations of the Consultative Group

From its 'wide ranging and sometimes contradictory discussions,' the Consultative Group produced a final report offering nineteen recommendations for archival management.⁵⁷ They addressed a wide range of issues, from the establishment of archival networks to the amendment of the Copyright Act, from issues such as legislation, conservation, and heritage management to supplies and security. Many recommendations were directed at such agencies as the Canadian Conservation Institute, the Heritage Canada Foundation, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.⁵⁸ They were premised on the Group's vision of a coordinated archival system that would allow for the protection of a wide range of both public and private records.

In its report, the Consultative Group redefined the concept of total archives. Specifically, the Group revised the philosophy behind the total archives concept, that

⁵² Association of British Columbia Archivists, Brief to the Consultative Group, Regehr Papers, p. 344.

⁵³ M. McTiernan, Association of British Columbia Archivists, 'Brief of the Executive of the Association of British Columbia Archivists (ABCA) to the Canada Council Consultative Group on Archives,' 15 June 1978, Regehr Papers, p. 3.

⁵⁴ L. Daniells, University Archivist, The University of British Columbia, 'Commentary on Some Issues to be Discussed by the Canada Council Consultative Group on Archives,' 23 June 1978, Regehr Papers.

⁵⁵ T. Eastwood, President, Association of Canadian Archivists, to Consultative Group on Archives, SSHRCC, 22 June 1978, Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) Records, MG 28, I 340, NAC, vol. 8, file 8-14.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ T.D. Regehr to M. Caya, 13 August 1979, Regehr Papers.

⁵⁸ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, pp. 109-11.

publicly funded archival institutions were the primary agencies responsible for the preservation of archival records. Instead, the Group argued, creating agencies had to care for their own records, for their own benefit and for the benefit of society. ‘Where now there are incentives to place older records in the major public archives,’ the Group argued, ‘these incentives should be reversed or parallel incentives should be established to assist the institution in preserving its own records.’⁵⁹

The Group did praise the adherents to total archives for ‘casting a broad net.’ Total archives was an efficient way to use limited resources, and it maximised the economies of scale. Researchers were well served by total archives, as their search for materials was simplified. ‘The concept of “total archives” is excellent,’ the Group stated. Unfortunately, ‘its fault lies in its application.’⁶⁰

The problem with the total archives concept was that it did not accommodate to the hundreds of archival repositories appearing across the country. Responsibility for private records acquisition had traditionally rested largely with one national archives, ten provincial archives, and a handful of well-established university or municipal archives. ‘With the cream of local material skimmed off to the central archives, any movement to establish an institutional or local archives withers and dies.’ But local repositories were being established, and a strict adherence to the total archives concept risked their sustainability.⁶¹

The Group emphasised the value of archival records to their communities, declaring that ‘the place local records have in local identities, pride, or heritage concerns is suggested by the emotion with which some communities defend their records, poorly housed though they may be.’ The Group felt that public repositories must retain ‘broad responsibilities’ to ensure the preservation of neglected private records. But the formation of local archives was both necessary and inevitable.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 62.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 64.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 64-65, 90-91.

⁶² Ibid.

To encourage the development of corporate, institutional, and regional archives, the Group envisioned a 'comprehensive system of archives in Canada.' Such a system would not be based in universities, as envisioned by the Symons Commission. Instead, it would encompass all types of archival facilities, public and private, university and business. Rather than dictating who may or may not care for archival records, the system would encourage cooperation among both existing and new repositories. These institutions would work together to develop standards of practice and cooperative programmes and services.

The Group pictured a series of provincial networks across the country. It never actually defined the concept of a network, but it implied that such a system could improve communications and practices, allowing archival repositories to establish common priorities and balanced programmes. The network would encourage an exchange of services and the development of descriptive standards. Further, it would improve the public image of archives.⁶³

The Group did not reject the responsibility of the public sector. Larger public repositories had a duty to foster the development of institutional, corporate, or local archives, rather than 'simply gathering all available archival material' themselves. Cooperative action, the Group argued, would allow a broader range of archival materials to be preserved, with the financial burden spread among public and private agencies. Assisting smaller archives must become a legitimate part of the work of larger repositories. They would need to balance their traditional archival programmes with this new leadership role.⁶⁴

Federal funding was essential to the success of this archival system.⁶⁵ This funding should come from the Public Archives of Canada, not from agencies such as the Canada Council or the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.⁶⁶ The Public

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 63-75.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 66-75, 109-111.

⁶⁵ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, pp. 5-6.

⁶⁶ Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Report of the Sixth Meeting of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives, 25 January 1979, p. 3. Copy obtained privately.

Archives should establish an Extension Branch, which would administer a wide range of services to the archival community, including consultation, technical assistance, and funding. The Extension Branch should be guided by a National Archival Advisory Committee, supported by a Canadian Association of Archives. This Association should provide an institutional perspective on archival policy and practice. To accomplish this work, the annual budget of the Public Archives should be increased by \$2.5 million, and its archival legislation revised.⁶⁷

The Consultative Group also recognised that there was an ‘urgent need’ for basic training, advanced education, and continuing research in archival management, in order to keep pace with changes in the nature and complexity of modern record keeping. One of the most pressing problems was the flood of records coming into archives. Archivists had to formulate ‘clear principles of appraisal.’ To do this wisely, they needed appropriate training. There was a need for at least one graduate programme, and possibly more, in archival studies. Funding was also required to support academic research in the field. Archival science was a legitimate discipline; its goal was to ‘establish the full meaning of historical records and to preserve a comprehensive record of society.’⁶⁸ The Group urged that the proposed Public Archives Extension Branch fund the establishment of suitable university-based archival studies programmes in each official language.

Reaction to the Consultative Group Report

The Consultative Group report was reviewed and discussed by a wide variety of archival groups. The Group anticipated negative reaction to its recommendation to decentralise archival responsibilities. After all, publicly funded archives had been operating as acquisition agencies for over one hundred years. To suggest that this activity was now undesirable, to claim that creating agencies were better placed to manage their records, seemed to contradict the essence of the total archives concept.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Consultative Group, *Canadian Archives*, p. 109.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 81.

⁶⁹ Interview with Ian Wilson, 4 November 1993.

However, few archivists criticised this redefinition of the total archives concept. Most agreed that the first priority of archival institutions must be the records of their sponsor agency.⁷⁰ They accepted that various organisations, governments, and businesses would and should establish their own archival facilities. The shift from total archives to an archival system was easily accepted.

Implicit in the Consultative Group's recommendations, and therefore in the archival community's acceptance of them, was the idea that new repositories, whether publicly or privately managed, would in fact be publicly accessible. Their records would still be available for research. And publicly funded archives would continue to acquire private records if necessary. The communications network among archives would ensure that there was no gap between institutions, regardless of the status of their sponsor agency.⁷¹ While the institutions responsible for the records might change, the purpose for their preservation had not. Records were for public use, for research and study. The administrative perspective, the importance of records management, was acknowledged. But it was seen as a vehicle for the ultimate purpose, to ensure the records were available for public use. As the Consultative Group noted, archival materials may not have been created for posterity, but posterity did have 'a strong claim to make.'

The Consultative Group's recommendation for an Extension Branch proved the most contentious to the archival community. The Association of Canadian Archivists rejected the idea of the Extension Branch and a Canadian Archival Association. Instead, it proposed a National Archival Records Commission, established by the federal government, to act as an arms-length agency providing funding for all levels of archival activity.⁷² In proposing this Commission, the Association drew on an argument that dated

⁷⁰ ACA, 'ACA Response to SSHRCC Report,' *Archives Bulletin* 5, 3 (June 1980): 5.

⁷¹ See for example M. Beyea to M. McTiernan, M. Swift, and I. Wilson, 12 July 1983, on the Archivist Task Force. Copy obtained privately.

⁷² See, for example, the 4th Interprovincial Conference of Ministers Responsible for Cultural and Historical Resources, 'Status Report on Archival Legislation and Related Matters,' 3 May 1982, p. 3. Copy obtained privately.

back to the days of the Massey Commission: the provinces, not the federal government, were primarily responsible for culture and heritage.⁷³

Objections to the idea of an Extension Branch were perhaps not surprising, given the growing distaste among archivists for centralised responsibility for archives. The Consultative Group had acknowledged the legitimacy of regional identities and responsibilities. It was only logical, therefore, that support for regional programmes not be funnelled through the Public Archives of Canada.⁷⁴ As Marion Beyea noted, 'there is a desire to avoid the National Museums Corporation experience of a large bureaucracy, Ottawa control and a disregard or lack of understanding of provincial situations and priorities.'⁷⁵

This rejection of centralised control did not pose a major problem to the federal government. It was not anxious to take on more responsibility. Following the trend of decentralisation, it considered federal/provincial cooperation as the best way to manage many public programmes, particularly those in the heritage field.⁷⁶

The goal of an archival system was encouraged by T.H.B. Symons, who had come to recognise as misinterpretations some of the findings of his report from 1975. In 1982, Symons wrote an article for *Archivaria* advocating the expansion of archival programmes. He argued that the two fundamental challenges to archives in the 1980s were the promotion of greater public awareness of the significance of archives and the development of an archival system.

Symons was discouraged by the widespread lack of understanding of the value of archives. This ignorance was leading to the loss of valuable historical materials, both public and private. Only the concerted acquisition efforts of archivists had saved any records from 'the garbage or the furnace.' Symons complained that 'archival records are

⁷³ ACA, 'ACA Response to SSHRCC Report,' p. 5.

⁷⁴ See, for example, the 4th Interprovincial Conference of Ministers, 'Status Report on Archival Legislation and Related Matters,' p. 4.

⁷⁵ M. Beyea to A.A. Saintonge, Department of Historical and Cultural Resources, New Brunswick, 20 May 1983. Copy obtained privately.

⁷⁶ See for example L.A. Dorais, National Museums of Canada, to B. Weilbrenner, Public Archives of Canada, 19 December 1984. Copy obtained privately.

an endangered species.’ In particular, he urged the preservation of materials such as film, sound, and broadcast records, as well as the records of arts organisations, businesses, labour organisations, and native groups. Backing down from his earlier proposal for university management, but not accepting a strictly institutional focus, Symons advocated that an archival network should be ‘based squarely on the official public archives of the federal and provincial governments and make natural use of the constitutional divisions and administrative structures of the country.’⁷⁷ To Symons, and the Consultative Group, the government still had a role to play in the preservation of society’s documentary heritage.

Conclusion

In its study of the state of Canadian archives, the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives redefined the concept of total archives. No longer would the responsibility for the preservation of archival records rest solely on the shoulders of large, publicly funded repositories. Creating agencies had a responsibility to care for their own records. Records management was critical to administration and efficiency, and the participation of the archivist in records management was essential to ensure valuable historical records were preserved.

But there was a broader social imperative to preserving archival records. Records formed the basis of society’s documentary heritage. They served posterity as well as the present. To ensure society had access to these valuable materials, now and in the future, the Consultative Group urged that the preservation of records not be seen as a purely administrative task. Records management was important, but its purpose was not just efficiency.

The realities of regional identities suggested that the total archives model applied in the past was no longer adequate. Communities would not be satisfied to see their records removed from their own territories and housed in distant repositories, whether

⁷⁷ T.H.B. Symons, ‘Archives and Canadian Studies,’ *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 59, 64.

governmental or university-based. Municipalities, regional associations, businesses, and organisations were going to preserve their heritage locally, regardless of archival theories. The archival community had to accept that fact.

To ensure the nation's documentary heritage was preserved, a network of public and private initiatives was required. The public sector would continue to play an important role in the preservation of society's records. Public archives were charged to redefine their responsibilities. The acquisition of private records might be necessary in some instances, but more important was to encourage agencies to preserve their own records. Public archives should make every effort to encourage and support local and institutional archival developments. However, they should be ready to step in and acquire records that might otherwise be lost.

Public funding was essential to this archival network. A coordinated archival system would ensure that public funding was distributed and the archival community well served. Such a system would ensure that all those responsible for society's archival heritage, including public and private agencies, had the means to fulfil their tasks.

The Consultative Group's report, published in 1980, prompted a variety of archival and government initiatives to establish a formal archival network. It also led to changes in the Public Archives of Canada, to the emergence of yet more community archives, and to the development of educational programmes for archivists. The 1980s saw the first steps toward a Canadian archival system.

A MATTER OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:

**THE ARCHIVAL COMMUNITY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF ARCHIVES, 1982-1995**

If archivists seriously think the federal or any other government will fund a N[ational] A[rchival] R[ecords] C[ommission] ... before the priorities of archives have been clearly established by the profession, they live in a dream world.

*Terry Cook*¹

Introduction

A number of changes took place in the archival community after the publication in 1980 of the report of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives. The most notable was the establishment in 1985 of the Canadian Council of Archives, charged to create and maintain a Canadian archival system. In an effort to ensure that the total archives concept was successfully translated into a new archival system, one of the Council's tasks was to develop a plan for the coordination of acquisition across the country. Its aim was to systematise acquisition and ensure that valuable records were preserved, whether in public or private hands. An acquisition strategy was a key component of the Council's programme.

Following the establishment of the Canadian Council of Archives, the Public Archives of Canada Act was revised. The changes to the legislation acknowledged the cooperative nature of archival work in the 1980s. At the same time, there was a continual

¹ 'Editorial,' *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 17.

increase in the number of institutional, regional, and community-based archival programmes in the country, from 200 to over 600. This growth, while not always applauded by archivists, was an unmistakeable sign of society's continuing devolution from national or provincial to regional and local levels. At the same time, the archival profession was establishing its own 'community identity,' as it developed a variety of educational programmes and adopted of a professional code of ethics.

In the face of these various changes within the archival world, debate heightened over the appropriate role of the archivist in society. In spite of Cook's admonition, the federal government *did* fund a national archival programme, but the archival community had still not agreed on its priorities and orientation. The relationship between history and archives was questioned, as archivists struggled to reconcile the unavoidable requirements of records and information management with the traditional desire to serve a wider societal purpose. Both the education and the professional orientation of the archivist were brought into question.²

Establishing a Canadian Archival System

Archivists were eager to begin the development of the archival system envisioned by the Consultative Group.³ But while there was general enthusiasm for the 'system,' there was never really a clear definition of its meaning. As Marion Beyea later noted, 'the concept of the system is nebulous, having different meanings to different people.'⁴ The emphasis was on the mechanisms needed to provide funding to institutions and coordinate communications between archivists. The Consultative Group's recommendation of an Extension Branch of the Public Archives of Canada was not immediately endorsed. Instead a variety of methods were considered by both government and archivists.

² See the background information provided in the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), 'Report, Inaugural Meeting of the Canadian Council of Archives,' enclosed in Jean-Pierre Wallot to Marion Beyea, 27 November 1985. Copy obtained privately.

³ For a history of these events leading to the development of an 'archival system,' see T. Eastwood, 'Attempts at National Planning for Archives in Canada, 1975-1985,' *The Public Historian* 8, 3 (Summer 1986): 74-91.

⁴ M. Beyea to A.A. Saintonge, Department of Historical and Cultural Resources, New Brunswick, 20 May 1983. Copy obtained privately.

The Association of Canadian Archivists urged the formation of the proposed National Archival Records Commission (NARC), instead of the government-run Extension Branch. A national congress on archives was held at Kingston, Ontario, on 3-4 June 1982, and there were attempts to ensure the NARC was discussed.⁵ However, it was not; archivists at the Kingston session were concerned with offering input to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, which had recently been struck to consider funding for cultural programmes.⁶

At this meeting and after, archivists requested the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to reconsider funding provincial or territorial archival work. SSHRC reiterated its position: archival repositories were not eligible for the funding programmes available.⁷ The Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee accepted in principle the idea of a National Archival Records Commission, but it did not take any action.⁸

The state of Canadian archives then became an agenda item at the Interprovincial Federal Deputies and Ministers Conference, held in 1982.⁹ The ministers resolved to encourage the evolution of an archival system, assigning the task to the Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists (DPTA) Committee. The DPTA Committee struck a Subcommittee composed of Marion Beyea as chair, Lee MacDonald (who replaced Michael Swift from the Public Archives of Canada), Ian Wilson, Miriam McTeirnan, and Peter Bower. Marcel Caya and Robert Morgan participated on behalf of the professional archival associations.¹⁰

The Subcommittee prepared a discussion paper on the structure of an archival system. This paper served as the basis for several more reports, including one in 1984 on

⁵ T. Cook, 'Editorial,' *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 15.

⁶ See M. Beyea and M. Caya, eds., *Planning for Canadian Archives: Proceedings of the First Congress on Archives* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1983).

⁷ See 'International Scene,' *The American Archivist* 46, 2 (Spring 1983): 210-11.

⁸ Association of Canadian Archivists, 'ACA Response to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee,' March 1983, Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA), Records, MG 28, I 340, NAC, March 1983. See also the published responses in *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 95-110.

⁹ Beyea to Saintonge, 20 May 1983.

¹⁰ See M. Beyea to M. Swift, I. Wilson, M. McTeirnan, and P. Bower, June 1984, M. Beyea, CCA files. See also M. Beyea, open letter, 9 October 1985. Copy obtained privately.

the implementation of the new system.¹¹ The core of this 'Implementation Guidelines' document was the now-accepted government stance that any national public programme was a 'matter of shared responsibility' between federal and provincial governments. Any archival system developed had to suit the differing needs of each province and territory across the country. It was best administered via cooperative provincial or territorial networks.

The Subcommittee recommended the establishment of an Advisory Council on the Archival System, to advise the Public Archives of Canada on the development and funding of archival programmes. These programmes could include interinstitutional activities, professional planning, staff exchanges, and research and development. This council would replace the proposed National Archival Records Commission. Money for the programmes, the Subcommittee suggested, should come from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Secretary of State's Canadian Studies Programme.¹²

The Subcommittee's report was approved by provincial ministers in 1984. Another discussion paper was prepared for review by the DPTA Committee in June 1985.¹³ In this discussion paper, the Subcommittee outlined its vision of the actual mechanisms required to establish and maintain the archival system. The approach was flexible, to accommodate to the needs of each province or territory and to allow effective participation by both archival institutions and professional associations.

The Subcommittee specifically emphasised the legitimacy of the total archives concept. It noted that the national, provincial, and territorial archives had developed a

¹¹ See Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists, 'Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists' Conference, The Canadian Archival System, Discussion Paper,' 12 August 1982, and 'Implementation Guidelines for the Canadian Archives System, A Report Prepared by the Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists Conference, 20 August 1984.' Copy obtained privately.

¹² Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists, 'Implementation Guidelines,' pp. 7-8.

¹³ See Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists, 'The Canadian Archives System: A Discussion Paper,' prepared by the Dominion/Provincial/Territorial Archivists' Conference Sub-Committee on the Archival System, June 1985, and M. Beyea, Chairman, Subcommittee on Canadian Archives System to the Dominion-Provincial-Territorial Archivists, 30 May 1985. Copy obtained privately.

‘dual responsibility’ for the records of their governments and for the records of individuals, groups, or businesses within their geopolitical jurisdiction. These ‘broad governmental archival mandates’ were ‘essential.’ But, the Subcommittee argued, local governments and private-sector institutions were increasingly committed to caring for their own records, and their efforts should be encouraged. After all, archives were ‘a fundamental resource for the development of a well-informed society and for the good conduct of public and private affairs.’¹⁴

A coordinated archival system, they felt, should allow for development of individual public or private sector repositories. It should also ensure public repositories had the right to step in to protect vulnerable records, regardless of their origins. It should be comprised of provincial and territorial councils, each reporting to a national advisory council composed of representatives of each of the local groups. The local groups should identify the archival needs in their province or territory, then develop specific programmes to address those needs. Programmes might include advising on standards, providing conservation services, disseminating finding aids, offering workshops, and so on.

The Public Archives of Canada should continue to fulfil its core archival responsibilities for the records of the federal government. But it should also serve as the key federal agency coordinating the system of provincial and territorial councils, supported by an advisory council. On the advice of this council, the Dominion Archivist should determine the allocation of resources and services, the development of programmes, and strategic planning for the archival system. The advisory council should also advise other federal agencies on any issues involving archival management.¹⁵

Professional archival associations should continue to represent the concerns of individual archivists. They should also participate as members of the advisory council in designing the archival system and developing grant or other programmes. They should

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 2-5.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

also be eligible to receive funding to address archival issues specifically relevant to the profession.¹⁶

In its conclusion to this report, the Subcommittee lamented that limited funding and poor planning were placing archival programmes 'in jeopardy.' As the number of repositories increased, action was required to ensure a cooperative system was established on solid principles. The Subcommittee urged the establishment of provincial and territorial councils as soon as possible. It encouraged the founders to structure their councils 'as best suits the prevailing stage of archival development and the archival needs of its jurisdiction.' It called on the Dominion Archivist, in consultation with provincial and territorial councils, to establish the national advisory council.¹⁷

The national council, the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), held its inaugural meeting with provincial and territorial council representatives on 7-8 November 1985 at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. The Council's budget for its first full year of operations was \$1,433,139.¹⁸

One of the first tasks of the CCA was to fund provincial and territorial councils to conduct a survey of their local needs and priorities. These surveys were carried out between 1985 and 1987; the results were published in 1988. Drawing on the data gathered from 627 archival agencies identified across the country, the CCA's Planning and Priorities Committee then identified national needs and developed a programme to address them.¹⁹

One of the components of the CCA's programme was to develop a strategy for the coordinated acquisition of archival records across the country. To develop this strategy, the CCA established an Acquisition Committee in 1989. By establishing this committee, the CCA expressed its belief that a collaborative acquisition programme for archives across Canada was both possible and desirable. The Acquisition Committee would

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸ Canadian Council of Archives, CCA Budget, 1985-1995. Copy obtained privately.

¹⁹ Canadian Council of Archives, Report, Inaugural Meeting, enclosed in J.P. Wallot to M. Beyea, 27 November 1985. Copy obtained privately.

examine mechanisms for the cooperative management of acquisition; it would examine appraisal requirements for contemporary records; and it would raise awareness among records creators of the importance of managing their archival records.²⁰

To achieve these goals, the Acquisition Committee undertook several initiatives. In 1990, it published a brochure outlining *Guidelines for Developing an Acquisition Policy*. In 1992, it conducted a survey of archives across the country to determine current acquisition practices and trends. Receiving responses from 309 institutions, the Committee determined that the development of acquisition networks was a high priority for the archival community. It also recognised that archivists needed guidance in the development of acquisition policies and related documents. Finally, it identified gaps in the documentation held in Canadian archives, notably in the areas of science and technology, travel and exploration, law and justice, medicine and health, labour, and the military.²¹

Following on this survey, the Committee in 1994 published *Building a National Acquisition Strategy: Guidelines for Acquisition Planning*. This publication was premised on the belief that archival repositories, both public and private, had a responsibility to acquire and preserve non-institutional records. It included three chapters, one on developing an acquisition strategy, one on developing an acquisition policy, and one on appraisal criteria for the acquisition of non-institutional records.²²

With the establishment of an Acquisition Committee at the national level, and the development of other archival programmes at the national, provincial, and territorial levels, the Canadian Council of Archives could claim to be making progress in the

²⁰ Canadian Council of Archives, *The Canadian Archival System: A Report on the National Needs and Priorities of Archives, Summary Report -- August 1989* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council of Archives, 1989), p. 23. See also D.R. Valpy, 'The Canadian Council of Archives and the National Acquisition Strategy: A Question of Accountability,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995.

²¹ Canadian Council of Archives, Acquisition Committee, 'Report on the 'Survey of Archival Holdings in Canadian Repositories,' (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council of Archives, 1992), pp. 3-7.

²² Canadian Council of Archives, *Building a National Acquisition Strategy: Guidelines for Acquisition Planning* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council of Archives, 1995). Work on the publication was completed in the summer of 1994, but the publication was not circulated until 1995.

development of a Canadian archival system. By 1995 the funds available had increased to \$2,436,492; from 1985 to 1995 a total of \$18,864,221 had been expended directly by the CCA.²³ In that year the CCA boasted that, since its establishment, it had funded the processing of 34,500 metres of textual materials, 4,000,000 photographs, 160,000 maps and architectural drawings, and 104,000 hours of sound and moving image records. In one of the most heavily funded programmes, to reduce the backlog of unprocessed records in archival repositories, the CCA had by 1995 provided more than \$10 million, which had been supplemented by matching funds from the archival repositories.²⁴ While it cannot be proved that the CCA money contributed to the establishment of new archives, it can be argued that the money furthered the aims of many existing repositories.

The Role of the Public Archives of Canada

In the 1980s the Public Archives had expanded its national acquisition programme, seeking out such diverse materials as the records of ethnic groups, labour organisations, politicians, artists, and scientists. Its London Office continued copying and acquiring records found in Britain and Europe; between 1981 and 1983 it acquired over ninety separate collections, totalling over one thousand individual items.²⁵

In light of the recommendations of the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives and the formation of the Canadian Council of Archives, the Public Archives of Canada took steps to expand its service component. No longer simply a government repository or an acquisition-oriented institution, the national archives was now a leader in the development and maintenance of the new archival system. Reflecting these changes, the

²³ Canadian Council of Archives, CCA Budget, 1985-1995. Copy obtained privately. From 1985 to 1989 all CCA activities and programmes were administered and funded through the operations of the National Archives of Canada; in 1989 the CCA took responsibility for the financial management of its work.

²⁴ See D.R. Valpy, 'The Canadian Council of Archives and Archival Acquisition: A Question of Accountability,' *ACA Bulletin* 20, 1 (September 1995): 10; and C. Hives, 'The Evolution of the Canadian Council of Archives and the Question of 'Accountability,' ' *ACA Bulletin* 20, 1 (November 1995): 8.

²⁵ See B.G. Wilson, 'Bringing Home Canada's Archival Heritage: The London Office of the Public Archives of Canada, 1872-1986,' *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985): 42.

Archives changed its name from 'Public' to 'National.' As stated in the *National Archives of Canada Act*, proclaimed in June 1987:

The objects and functions of the National Archives of Canada are to conserve private and public records of national significance and facilitate access thereto, to be the permanent repository of the records of government institutions and of ministerial records, to facilitate the management of records of government institutions and of ministerial records, and to encourage archival activities and the archival community.²⁶

In 1988, the National Archives revised its acquisition policy to encourage cooperation. It confirmed its responsibility to develop 'a broad and comprehensive collection by acquiring records of national significance.'²⁷ Records of national significance were defined as those which 'record the efforts and experiences of individuals, groups, institutions, corporate bodies, and other organisations which have become nationally or internationally recognized,' as well as those records documenting the physical environment, cultural, economic, social, or other trends of national scope, and those revealing, 'in a notable way,' typical Canadian experiences. To accomplish its acquisition efforts, the National Archives specifically acknowledged its relationship to the CCA, stating that 'the National Archivist may seek the advice of the Canadian Council of Archives in developing cooperative acquisition strategies.'²⁸

The Increase in Archival Repositories

The need for cooperative strategies increased as the number of institutions managing archival records continued to grow. As mentioned earlier, in 1980, the Consultative Group had identified 200 archival repositories. In 1982, Statistics Canada reported 491 institutions, and in 1989 the Canadian Council of Archives identified 627. Institutions included public and private, community and regional, thematic, religious, business, and educational.²⁹

²⁶ Canada, *National Archives of Canada Act*, c. 1.

²⁷ National Archives of Canada, 'Acquisition Policy,' 8 March 1988, sections 2, 4.2, 9.6. Copy obtained privately.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Canadian Council of Archives, *The Canadian Archival System, Summary Report*, pp. 7-8.

But the growth in local and regional archives could not be attributed solely to changes in the archival community. More important was the continued growth and development of local and regional identities and a resulting devolution of responsibility. Since the 1970s there had been a continued decentralisation of functions from federal to provincial, or provincial to local, levels. These functions spanned such diverse areas as health care, environmental regulation, public transit, and social services.³⁰ The management analyst Nancy Adler noted that, as the boundaries of economics have become global, and the boundaries of government have remained national or provincial, the boundaries of cultural identity have reduced themselves to a community level. As Adler has argued:

Whether they are Anglophone or Francophone Canadians, Czechs or Slovaks, or Malays and Chinese, people increasingly answer the question 'Who am I?' at a level smaller than the nation-state (and often not coincident with any particular country's national borders).³¹

This increasingly narrow sense of identity, this growth of community rather than national orientation, was a continuation of the sense of regionalism evident a century before. Regional identities had been a reality in Canada from the days when Arthur Doughty had offended local sensibilities with his vigorous acquisition efforts. By the 1980s and 1990s, the search for identity had lead Canadian society, like other societies, to break into various 'communities,' whether geographically, politically, religiously, ideologically, or thematically based. These communities wished to establish their own

³⁰ These activities are discussed in more detail in E.A. Lindquist and K.B. Murray, 'Appendix: A Reconnaissance of Canadian Administrative Reform during the Early 1990s,' *Canadian Public Administration* 37, 3 (Fall 1994): 468-89. Decentralisation and regionalisation has been a constant issue in Canadian politics since Confederation in 1867. Some relevant articles on the topic include H.R. Baker, 'The Impact of Central Government Services on the Small Community,' *Canadian Public Administration* 3, 2 (June 1960): 97-106; T.J. Plunkett and K.A. Graham, 'Whither Municipal Government?,' *Canadian Public Administration* 25, 4 (Winter 1982): 602-18; G.R. Weller, 'Local Government in the Canadian Provincial North,' *Canadian Public Administration* 24, 1 (Spring 1981): 44-72; N.B. Ridler, 'Fiscal Constraints and the Growth of User Fees among Canadian Municipalities,' *Canadian Public Administration* 27, 3 (Fall 1984): 429-36; and R. Simeon, 'Considerations on Centralization and Decentralization,' *Canadian Public Administration* 29 (Fall 1986): 445-61. An article advocating local government responsibility is A. O'Brien, 'Local Government Priorities for the Eighties,' *Canadian Public Administration* 19, 1 (Spring 1976): 102-11.

³¹ N.J. Adler, *Globalization, Government and Competitiveness*, The John L. Manion Lecture, Canadian Centre for Management Development (Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994), p. 6.

identities, often by creating interest groups or associations, museums, libraries, resource centres, and archives.

The archival consequence of this shrinking of societal boundaries was the establishment of more and more local, community, or private archival institutions. Gary Mitchell, of the British Columbia Archives and Records Service, claimed that community-based archives are 'the new growth area within archives.'³² Hugh Taylor argued that:

Oral history, folklore and the archives of families, businesses and institutions will find a natural home in the Community Archives where all can feel and experience a dynamic heritage experience in which they can be personally involved and which will be passed down to their descendants.³³

Taylor saw family and local history as 'a search for personal identity in an era of intensive and rapid change' and suggested that the community heritage movement would continue to expand as societies sought meaning in locally generated activities.³⁴

Some archivists expressed concern about the sustainability of these local repositories, many of which were funded through grant programmes such as those of the Canadian Council of Archives. Jean Dryden argued that the proliferation of funding for community archives could perpetuate archives that did not otherwise have the economic resources to sustain themselves.³⁵ Marcel Caya saw a need to limit community archival development, arguing that if local archives did not have the basic resources to sustain their operations, it might be necessary to stop supporting them. Caya argued that the role of the archives is 'memory management'; therefore, repositories require adequate core funding to do their job.³⁶ On the other hand, Bennett McCardle of the Ontario Archives

³² G. Mitchell, 'Private Acquisitions: Cut It Now or Cut It Later,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995, p. 3.

³³ H.A. Taylor, 'Reconsidering Acquisition,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Ottawa, June 1994, pp. 7-8.

³⁴ H.A. Taylor, 'The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage,' *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 123.

³⁵ Interview with Jean Dryden, 2 November 1993.

³⁶ Interview with Marcel Caya, 29 October 1993, transcript p. 9.

noted that of two hundred archival repositories in existence in Ontario in 1993, only two had ceased operations, and one of those later resumed its activities.³⁷

The question of the sustainability of community archives remained unanswered, but the impetus to establish and maintain more and more local repositories, including institutional, association, and private archives, grew stronger across the country into the 1990s. Inevitably, this meant that an increasing numbers of archivists, whether formally trained or not, were going to be needed to manage the growing number of archival collections.

Archival Education and Professional Development

In its report, the Consultative Group had recommended the establishment of graduate studies in archival studies. Subsequently, a number of educational programmes were established. Other initiatives, including short courses and workshops, were also developed or expanded. These various programmes served a range of archival requirements, from government repositories to community archives. As well, the profession sought to advance itself through the adoption of a code of ethics for archival practice.

For some years, the Association of Canadian Archivists had been investigating the need for more formalised archival education. In 1976, Hugh Taylor and his colleague Edwin Welch, both English-trained archivists, developed guidelines for graduate studies in archival education. This was seen as a first step toward a graduate programme in Canada. The Guidelines recommended that educational programmes be university based and interdisciplinary. Students would be required to obtain exposure to, if not experience in, and archival repository prior to commencing the course. Recognising that archival studies was not an 'exact science,' the Guidelines recommended that a variety of teaching methods be used, including lectures, seminar discussions, research papers, and practical demonstrations. In particular, the Guidelines recommended courses in the nature,

³⁷ Interview with Bennett McCardle, 4 November 1993.

acquisition, processing, and use of archives, and in the administration of archival repositories.³⁸

As Taylor and Welch were completing their guidelines, the University of British Columbia (UBC) was developing a proposal for a programme in archival studies, offered jointly by the School of Librarianship and the Department of History. The UBC proposal was criticised by some members of the archival community, who felt the Association of Canadian Archivists should have been involved in the planning process. Others feared that, as the programme was to be offered by librarians and historians, not archivists, it would become simply a tool to produce 'handmaidens to history.' There was also concern that a functional archival programme could not operate at such a distance from the major repositories in the country, especially the national archives.³⁹

In spite of the professional, academic, and administrative hurdles, the University of British Columbia's Library School launched the Master of Archival Studies Programme in 1981, the first graduate programme in archival studies in North America. Terry Eastwood, formerly of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, was appointed the first professor and head of the programme. With its new responsibilities, the library school was subsequently renamed the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies.

The UBC programme began with a distinctly historical and cultural perspective. Courses were offered in historiography, oral history, and genealogy; conservation was a requirement and records management an elective. Students were also required to complete both a thesis and a practicum. This academic orientation was in part the

³⁸ H.A. Taylor and E. Welch, 'Association of Canadian Archivists: Guidelines Towards a Curriculum for Graduate Archival Training Leading to a Master's Degree in Archival Science, 1976,' contained as Appendix 1 to T. Eastwood, 'The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia,' *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 35-52. (Appendix 1 is pp. 44-49.)

³⁹ See I. Ross, 'Library-Archive Relations: The Question of Education,' *Canadian Library Journal* 37, 1 (February 1980): 44. See also interview with Laurenda Daniells, 6 October 1993. Laurenda Daniells discussed the development of the UBC programme at length.

influence of Roy Stokes, the head of the school at the time and a British-educated scholar who advocated the traditional aspects of archival work.⁴⁰

With an expansion in the number of faculty, the orientation of the UBC programme changed. In 1987, Luciana Duranti, an Italian archivist, joined the university's faculty; in 1994 Charles Dollar joined from the National Archives in the United States. By 1994, required courses included records management, government records in Canada, and automation in archives; students could also take a course on law and archives. Conservation was available as an elective, and by 1995 the thesis also became an optional element.⁴¹

The UBC programme was followed by the establishment of a Master's Programme in Archival Studies at the Department of History of the University of Manitoba. This programme received its first students in September 1991. As of 1995, Tom Nesmith, formerly of the National Archives of Canada, was the head and only professor at the Manitoba programme. The first year of the two-year graduate programme included three broad courses. A course on the history of recorded communication explored the relationships between the types of records created, the institutions responsible for their creation, and the wider society within which these institutions operate. A second course examined 'selected problems in archival studies.' This course began with an examination of archival theory and practice in Europe and North America. It also considered contemporary problems in archival administration, including appraisal, arrangement and description, conservation, and management. A course in intellectual history was designed to prepare students to consider the societal context in which records were created and managed in Canada. Students then were to complete a practicum and write a thesis. As well, students had an opportunity to take an elective relevant to their

⁴⁰ Interview with Terry Eastwood, 14 December 1993. See also interview with Laurenda Daniells, 6 October 1993. See also Eastwood, 'The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme,' esp. pp. 37-38.

⁴¹ University of British Columbia, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, 'Master of Archival Studies: Course Descriptions, Winter Session 1993/1994,' (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1993).

research interests, in such divergent areas as computer science, management, history, native studies, or art history.⁴²

The most recent graduate programme was established at the University of Toronto, which accepted its first students in September 1995. The degree, a Master of Information Studies, was to be offered through the Faculty of Information Science (renamed from the Faculty of Library and Information Science in 1994). The programme encompassed both the previous degrees in librarianship and information science, with an added component in archival management. The consolidated degree was based on the premise that 'the whole field surrounding 'information' -- its definition, its creation, its management, and its use -- demands a new style of education.'⁴³

The programme would offer three components: archival studies, library and information science, and information systems. While each component was to be distinctive in its purpose and content, the three would overlap at various points. Students would take core, required, and elective courses. The four core courses would cover the social environment of information; the way information is presented, organised, and stored; the management of information organisations; and research methods. The four required archival courses included archives concepts and issues; archives science and functions; archives programmes and services; and an introduction to information technology. Students would then take another eight electives to qualify for the degree. These might include a practical component and a major research project.

Barbara Craig, formerly of York University Archives, was appointed to coordinate the archival stream of the programme. She argued that, given the economic climate in universities in the 1990s, it was administratively easier to argue for the development of one combined degree than the creation of a new and separate archival degree to accompany two already existing programmes.⁴⁴ She has suggested that the archival

⁴² T. Nesmith, 'Hugh Taylor's Contextual Idea for Archives and the Foundation of Graduate Education in Archival Studies,' in B.L. Craig ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992): 13-37.

⁴³ B.L. Craig, 'The University of Toronto's Master of Information Studies Programme and Archives Education,' *ACA Bulletin* 20, 1 (September 1995): 13.

⁴⁴ Interview with Barbara Craig, 2 November 1993.

stream is designed to ensure that 'archives requirements in the future are met regardless of the physical location of either the record or the institution.'⁴⁵

Algonquin College in Ottawa, Ontario, developed an Archives Technicians course, graduating its first students in 1993. The programme, extending over four semesters, includes four courses in English, four in French, two in Canadian history, and two in the history of archives. As well, there were two courses in records management, two in archival research, one on public service, and a number on the arrangement, description, and conservation of archival materials. According to the programme's director, John Smart, the emphasis was on 'hands-on' work, with an accent on technical and practical training rather than regular lectures.⁴⁶

The Association of Canadian Archivists has made several attempts to develop a post-appointment educational programme for working archivists. Introductory, advanced, and specialised courses were to be included in the programme, offered as two- or three-day workshops held in various parts of the country, with a complete rotation of courses offered over five years. However, as of 1995 this programme had not developed as originally envisioned. Other archival and records management courses and programmes have also emerged across the country, including continuing education programmes offered by provincial archival associations, short courses offered as summer school programmes, and individual courses within larger degree programmes.

Fifteen years after the Consultative Group recommended the establishment of graduate programmes for archivists, the educational opportunities for Canadian archivists in 1995 were vast and varied. As more sophisticated educational programmes developed, the archival profession began investigating issues such as the certification of archivists and greater control over the profession. One step taken was to develop and pass a Code of Ethics for Archivists in Canada, adopted by the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1992. According to Heather MacNeil, a member of the committee responsible for developing the code, it existed to serve a number of purposes: 'to assist members in the

⁴⁵ Craig, 'The University of Toronto's Master of Information Studies Programme,' p. 14.

⁴⁶ Interview with John Smart, 22 October 1993, transcript p. 13.

resolution of ethical dilemmas that may present themselves in the course of their work; to promote ethical behaviour by the profession; and to communicate to society the values to which its members adhere.⁴⁷

The ACA code consisted of two parts. The first referred to archival principles; the second to their application. Under the first section, Canadian archivists were mandated to adhere to six specific principles. The first was to ensure the intellectual integrity of archival records by promoting 'responsible physical custodianship' for the benefit of present and future users. The second was to perform archival work without discrimination of any kind. The third was to promote the greatest possible use of records, while giving due attention to personal privacy, confidentiality, and preservation. The fourth was to follow accepted archival principles and a high standard of conduct. The fifth was to work to advance the field of archival studies. The sixth was to ensure that professional knowledge and experience would be used to benefit society as a whole.

The second section advised on the application of these principles. For example, archivists were required to respect their institutional mandates and resources while ensuring the integrity of the fonds; and they were charged to respect donor agreements, governmental regulations, the physical care of the records, and the full use of archival materials in their care. Archivists were also to ensure their personal conduct remained professional and ethical, particularly with respect to the pursuit of personal research and the advancement of knowledge.⁴⁸

Some archivists questioned the enforceability of the code of ethics. The Association of Canadian Archivists has not established the authority to control entrance into the profession. It could not discipline members for non-adherence to the code or other similar guidelines. As of 1995, the ACA was investigating the expansion of its

⁴⁷ H. MacNeil, 'Implementing the ACA Code of Ethics,' *ACA Bulletin* 20, 1 (September 1995): 8.

⁴⁸ Association of Canadian Archivists Ethics Committee, 'A Code of Ethics and Guidance for Archivists in Canada,' quoted in full as Appendix I to T.I. May, 'Archival Professionalism and Ethics: An Assessment of Archival Codes in North America,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1995, pp. 133-35.

professional responsibilities and the possibility of certification or licensure, but no concrete steps have been taken in that direction.⁴⁹

The Continuing Debate over the Role of the Archivist

The archival community reexamined its societal role in the face of the formation of the Canadian Council of Archives, as well as the growing quantity of repositories and the establishment of educational programmes. Were archivists historians? Were they information managers? Who did they serve, and why? As Terry Cook had indicated, the archival community still did not seem to feel its priorities and goals had been clarified. As a result, archivists naturally grew more concerned over the 'historian versus administrator' question. The pages of *Archivaria* were filled with a sometimes contentious intellectual debate.

In his article in *Archivaria* in 1982, Tom Nesmith advocated a recognition of the historical orientation of the archivist. Nesmith, who at the time was still at the Public Archives of Canada, argued that 'the archivist needs to be a scholar who can administer an archival institution and recognise the administrative interest the sponsor of the archives has in the records it keeps.' He suggested that the archival profession had been weakened by its recent search for autonomy from academic history. He encouraged archivists to renew their scholarly perspective. Academic scholarship was essential for the archival profession to make 'significant inroads against its marginality.' Nesmith suggested that the days of reliance on the private manuscript source, with its simpler provenance, familiarity of medium, and narrower range of subjects, was declining as researchers turned to extensive quantities of government records, seeking information on vast ranges of topics. He feared that archivists, rather than familiarising themselves with the content of these extensive government records, were increasingly focusing on their administrative responsibilities. They were losing their research skills.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See the references and commentary provided in May, 'Archival Professionalism and Ethics.'

⁵⁰ T. Nesmith, 'Archives from the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship,' *Archivaria* 14 (Summer 1982): 6, 22-24.

Nesmith's piece was followed in 1983 by what became a highly controversial *Archivaria* article. In 'Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well,' George Bolotenko, one of Nesmith's colleagues at the Public Archives, argued that the historian was still the best archivist: 'willing or not, the archivist must be a historian, at least by inclination, and preferably by calling.' The archivist was 'a representative of the world of research in the world of administration.' Bolotenko disagreed with the vision of theoreticians like Hilary Jenkinson, who had argued that historians ought not be archivists. He feared that archivists, searching for their professional identity, had moved too far away from their historical roots. While he was not advocating that an archivist must have a Ph.D in history, he believed that a training in historical methodology would provide the archivist with an awareness of the historical context, essential to understanding the context of the record's creation.⁵¹

Bolotenko's views were praised by several archivists, who favoured this cultural approach over what they saw as the rigidity of information management. Patrick Dunae argued that 'archives at the municipal and provincial levels should be actively collecting a wide range of historical records pertinent to their region.' He further suggested that archivists should mount historical exhibitions, conduct workshops, publicise their collections, participate in research projects, and publish not only descriptions of records but also original research and collections of documents. He regretted that contemporary archivists were more concerned with management of government records. He feared the spectre of 'business efficiency,' of the 'archivist-administrator,' or, worse, the 'archivist-technocrat.'⁵²

Thomas Spencer agreed that the archivist should be an historian, a researcher and scholar, who published and otherwise contributed to the scholarly and popular community. Such efforts would publicise the work of the archives, allow the archivist an understanding of research work, and encourage a broader knowledge of archival

⁵¹ G. Bolotenko, 'Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well,' *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 6, 20, 25.

⁵² P.A. Dunae, 'Archives and the Spectre of 1984: Bolotenko Applauded,' *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 289.

holdings.⁵³ Ernest Dick suggested that not only would the historian make the best archivist but the archivist would, indeed, make the best historian. The writing of history, argued Dick, was a 'fundamental part of our responsibilities' as archivists.⁵⁴

Other archivists were critical of Bolotenko's view. Carol Spadoni rejected Bolotenko's criticism of an alliance between archival and library work, suggesting that such an approach would only lead to misunderstanding and suspicion. In particular, Spadoni suggested that to understand and appreciate the historical past did not require formalised historical education. An appreciation of history may be acceptable but formal education was undesirable.⁵⁵ Anthony Rees suggested that Bolotenko was using a siege mentality to limit the growth of the profession.⁵⁶ R. Scott James felt that Bolotenko's use of the term 'historian' was 'indiscriminate,' and that the end result was a confusing presentation of a 'tired issue.'⁵⁷

Bob Taylor-Vaisey suggested that 'identification and control of archival resources depends today on the application of more than historical training, skill, or disposition.' Instead, he argued for a functional understanding of records, the creation of information systems, and a good understanding of management techniques. He suggested that archivists should have an understanding of the 'legal, operational, administrative, fiscal and organizational value' of records, not just of their historical value. Otherwise, archivists would miss 'the opportunity and necessity of preserving the archival records for which we have responsibility.'⁵⁸

Bolotenko provided a rebuttal to these criticisms and comments in the next issue of *Archivaria*. He reiterated his position that the '*sine qua non* of a good archivist (as also of a good historian) is his understanding of the context within which documents are created, words are written, things are said.' He argued that 'there is a broad cultural

⁵³ T.T. Spencer, 'The Archivist as Historian: Towards a Broader Definition,' *ibid.*, pp. 296-300.

⁵⁴ E.J. Dick, 'A Challenge to Archivists and the ACA,' *ibid.*, p. 304.

⁵⁵ C. Spadoni, 'No Monopoly for 'Archivist-Historians': Bolotenko Assailed,' *ibid.*, pp. 291-95.

⁵⁶ A.L. Rees, 'Bolotenko's Siege Mentality,' *ibid.*, pp. 301-2.

⁵⁷ R. James, 'A Wearisome Issue,' *ibid.*, pp. 302-3.

⁵⁸ R. Taylor-Vaisey, 'Archivist-Historians Ignore Information Revolution,' *ibid.*, p. 307.

dimension to archives which, like most things cultural today, is under assault.' He expressed his own vision of the true purpose of archival work:

That purpose is participation in the great cultural adventure of history -- in its study and its writing and its dissemination. It is a grand tradition under assault by technicians and separators posing as the cutting edge of modernity. In speaking of their newness, and while brandishing fresh swords, they forget that to their use of weapons there should be some purpose. Or is it sufficient simply to glorify the novel tool, to set it up as an idol, to deify it in its own right? I would still prefer to think that it is the idea, the end purpose, and not the means at the disposal of the blind which fires the archivist and defines his calling.⁵⁹

In spite of Bolotenko's eloquent words, the Canadian archival community remained divided over its role.⁶⁰ As will be seen, events in the 1980s and 1990s did not generate clarity over the role of the archivist.

Conclusion

In the 1980s, the archival community lobbied to establish the archival system envisioned by the Consultative Group, succeeding in 1985 with the establishment of the Canadian Council of Archives. The Council was responsible for coordinating archival activities and encouraging and facilitating communication among institutions. It was also to develop an acquisition strategy to assist the the preservation of a wide range of public and private records. The newly named National Archives of Canada recognised the cooperative focus of archival work, redefining its own responsibilities to allow for leadership and liaison rather than simply acquisition and preservation.

The archival community was growing; the number of institutions across the country was increasing dramatically. This growth was not simply a result of the

⁵⁹ G. Bolotekno, 'Of Ends and Means: In Defence of the Archival Ideal,' *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984): 241, 245, 247.

⁶⁰ The historical community was aware of the changing perspective of public repositories, as many turned more and more to administration and away from scholarly services. For example, in their editorial 'What's Wrong with the PAC?', the co-editors of the *Canadian Historical Review*, David Bercuson and J.L. Granatstein, criticised the mounting restrictions on access to records and on the services provided by the national archives. They complained that 'bureaucratization increases, service to scholars decreases, and fears mount that the PAC is being run by and for administrators, not for historians.' D.J. Bercuson and J.L. Granatstein, 'The Public Archives of Canada and the Historical Profession,' *Canadian Historical Review* 62, 1 (March 1981): 1-2.

development of provincial and territorial archival councils or the infusion of public money. More, it was a symptom of an ever-present Canadian emphasis on local and regional identity over national and provincial affiliations. Government, and society as a whole, accepted that social and cultural programmes were increasingly focused on the community level. The growth legitimised the work of the Canadian Council of Archives, particularly its efforts at acquisition planning.

At the same time as society was decentralising and the number of institutions growing, the archival profession was seeking a distinct and more formalised identity. The establishment of a graduate programme in archival studies at UBC in 1981 had been followed a decade later by two more graduate programmes and the expansion of a variety of basic and continuing educational initiatives. The rise of university education seemed to herald the beginning of the end of ad hoc training programmes. A professional code of ethics was passed by the Association of Canadian Archivists, reinforcing the professional orientation of archival work.

To all appearances, the combination of efforts of the National Archives and the Canadian Council of Archives suggested that the desired Canadian archival system would soon appear. All signs were pointing to a new archival reality, one based on archival cooperation, formalised acquisition planning, and a recognition that both public and private sector agencies could share the responsibility for preserving Canada's documentary heritage. While public repositories would no longer acquire all records available, there was no question that the public sector accepted a leadership role, particularly in guaranteeing the acquisition and preservation of a wide spectrum of society's archival records. The publicly funded, cooperatively managed Canadian Council of Archives was to serve as the focal point for this coordinated archival system; its national acquisition strategy ensuring a planned and thoughtful approach to the protection of records.

As of 1996, the future of this national archival system is in some doubt. In the winter of 1993, the Canadian Council of Archives resolved to disband the Acquisition

Committee and cancel the development of a national acquisition strategy.⁶¹ Chris Hives, president of the CCA, noted that the Council felt the committee had accomplished 'all that it could' and the executive had 'serious misgivings' about the value of future work.⁶² The organisation established to ensure the coordinated preservation of archival records -- to manage the archival system -- had rejected a major component of that coordination work. Acquisition was no longer considered a priority. Indeed, as will be seen, it was no longer seen by many as a relevant archival function. The news was unexpected, if not shocking.

⁶¹ D.R. Valpy, 'The Canadian Council of Archives and the National Acquisition Strategy: A Question of Accountability,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995. Information also provided through personal communication with D. Richard Valpy, 5 December 1995.

⁶² C. Hives, 'The Evolution of the Canadian Council of Archives and the Question of Accountability,' *ACA Bulletin* 20, 2 (November 1995): 8.

THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY:

THE DECLINE IN PRIVATE RECORDS ACQUISITION

Private acquisition is not a primary information records responsibility for the archives or the archivist.

Gary Mitchell,
*British Columbia Archives and Records Service*¹

Introduction

Since the late 1980s public archives have reduced their participation in the acquisition and preservation of private records. They have focused their energies and resources on the care of public records, particularly the maintenance of records management systems. It could be argued that this decline has come in part as a result of the proliferation of community, local, and institutional repositories. With the development of an archival system, the larger institutions have identified a leadership role for themselves, encouraging local agencies to acquire records of local value.

However, that rationale for the decline of acquisition by public repositories does not address the larger societal changes affecting archives. It also does not explain why the Canadian Council of Archives, the agency charged to establish and maintain an archival system in Canada, would cancel the development of a national acquisition strategy. Is the idea of a coordinated network of public and private archives no longer considered a valid goal? Does the archival community no longer identify the acquisition of records as a legitimate responsibility?

The changing orientation of public repositories is the result of several factors, each affecting and being affected by the other. Three are most significant. The first is the

¹ G. Mitchell, 'Private Acquisitions: Cut it Now or Cut it Later,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995, p. 3.

marked change in the stability of Canada's economy and the consequent restructuring of government services. As Canada's prosperity has decreased, governments have been forced to reevaluate their functions and eliminate all but the most essential programmes. The second factor, related to the first, is the increasing need for government to be accountable to the public, as mandated by access to information laws now in effect across the country. Government archives have had to restructure their programmes in order to comply with legislated requirements to provide public access to information. The third factor is the continuing development of information technologies. The ephemeral nature of electronic information has prompted archives to concentrate more on the care of current records and the establishment of record-keeping systems and less on the acquisition of non-sponsor records or the preservation of electronic information from external sources. These three factors have combined to cause public archival repositories to redefine their roles and responsibilities and to reduce, if not eliminate, their involvement in private records acquisition.

As these factors are influencing institutions, the archival profession is again examining the purpose of archival work. Two perspectives have emerged. One has advocated the role of the archivist as records administrator. The archivist serves the creating agency and thus protects the record, as evidence, for current and future use. According to this view, the acquisition of non-sponsor records is of questionable validity: removing records from their administrative origins damages their value as evidence, reducing their ultimate archival value. Society will be better served by a network of these institutional archives than by a reliance on the public sector for archival preservation.

The other view is that archival repositories have a wider responsibility than simply the records of their sponsor agency. To ensure the preservation of society's documentary heritage, archivists must preserve a broad range of records, including records acquired from other sources. These records are kept not just as legal evidence but proof of society's actions and thoughts over time. The preservation of society's documentary heritage thus includes the acquisition of those records that might otherwise be lost, regardless of their origins.

These two views have been discussed and debated by archival practitioners across the country, in the professional literature and in public forums. Key players in the archival community have expressed strong opinions about their vision of the archival future. Their opinions are no doubt influencing the future of archival practice, including archival acquisition. Advocates of both perspectives are involved in critical archival planning by agencies such as the Canadian Council of Archives and the National-Provincial-Territorial Archivists Conference.

The Restructuring of Canada's Economy

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Canadian governments at all levels have faced a marked challenge to their economies. In 1975, the federal government had recorded a national deficit of \$3.8 billion. By 1982 the deficit was \$21 billion, with Canada suffering the second highest debt load among the G7 nations, after Italy. By the 1980s this debt had reached \$30 billion; by 1994 it exceeded \$41 billion. In 1994, the combined federal and provincial debt totalled almost 100 percent of the country's gross domestic product. While this rising debt has not caused an economic depression, it has caused all levels of government -- federal, provincial, and territorial -- to alter significantly their activities: removing, restructuring, or decentralising programmes or departments.²

The most dramatic evidence of this restructuring is the fact that all of Canada's national and provincial governments in power in 1995, with the exception of the Quebec separatists, have promoted policies of economic restraint and reduced government spending. This includes both traditionally conservative political parties and, notably, a large number of liberal or socialist parties, which have historically advocated higher, rather than lower, public spending. In electing these governments, the Canadian people

² See W.D. Coleman, 'Macroeconomic Policy: Dwindling Options,' in M.M. Atkinson, *Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy* (Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), p. 235. See also D. Dodge, 'How Government Operates in an Environment of Fiscal Restraint,' in *Rethinking Government: The Dewar Series, Perspectives on Public Management* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1994), esp. pp. 20-21. See also W. Thorsell, 'Canada Counts the Cost,' *The World in 1996* (London: The Economist Newspaper Limited, 1995): 67.

have sent a strong signal that the public sector must exhibit some fiscal rectitude. As the federal finance minister, Paul Martin, said in 1993, ‘one of the most important things we can do is to re-establish the credibility of government and, to do that, we must restore control over the nation’s finances.’³

The growing deficit is the result of a number of factors. Among them is a general decrease in economic productivity in Canada that began in the 1970s, as manufacturing and trade declined. This was partly owing to world-wide economic changes but was also partly a result of the increasing globalisation of society, brought on by dramatic advances in information and telecommunications technologies. As the potential for and speed of communications has increased, businesses and governments have been forced to restructure their practices to remain competitive. Resources have been redirected in order to streamline systems, improve technologies, and rationalise programmes. As a result, Canadian society as a whole has experienced slowed economic growth and increased inflation, with a new emphasis on global competition.

Canada is not the only country faced with the need to restructure government activities. Changing technologies and a call for less expansive, more efficient government are affecting all societies.⁴ But the Canadian government has had particular difficulty adjusting to new economic realities, as it has had to rationalise its history of significant public expenditure with the fact that many government programmes can no longer be sustained at the same levels.

Government services have grown over the years to accommodate to the Canadian philosophy that the public sector has a direct responsibility to provide services to all its citizens on an equal basis. These include publicly funded and universally available medical and health services, comprehensive old-age security pensions and family

³ Quoted in J. Maxwell, ‘Rethinking Government,’ in Dodge, ed., *Rethinking Government*, p. 43.

⁴ At the time of writing, the United States government had been forced in November and December 1995 to close a range of federal operations temporarily, as the president and Congress debated the government’s right to exceed budget allocations. In France, a series of public-sector strikes were held in November and December 1995 to protest government cuts to social service programmes, which the government claimed were essential to allow the country to gain the financial stability necessary to participate in the move toward a single European currency.

allowance payments, and a range of unemployment, welfare, and social assistance benefits.⁵ This public responsibility has also extended to the cultural sphere, with artistic, scholarly, and cultural programmes supported by government.⁶

To meet their responsibilities for social programmes, federal, provincial, and territorial governments have spent an increasingly high percentage of the gross domestic product on public sector programming. But to reduce the ever-increasing debt, governments have had to raise taxes and reduce spending, including expenditures on many well-entrenched social programmes. Cuts have been made in areas such as health care, education, welfare, and defence, as well as the country's generous unemployment insurance system. Many public agencies are being privatised and many programmes reduced or modified.⁷

Government Restructuring, Public Archives, and Private Records Acquisition

At the highest political level, these budget cuts have usually been 'across the board' percentage reductions. The decision about which programmes to eliminate or reduce and which to continue has often been left to the actual departments or agencies. As a consequence, federal, provincial, and territorial archives have had to review and restructure their functions and services. Many have chosen to reduce the more publicly oriented components of their programmes, such as exhibitions, publications, research services, and the acquisition of private records. Instead they are focusing resources on administrative tasks such as the expansion of records management programmes, in part because of the requirements of access to information legislation or the management of electronic records, discussed below. Like other public agencies, they have been forced to identify and focus on their primary responsibilities and eliminate or reduce other programmes.

⁵ See J. Maxwell, 'Rethinking Government,' in Dodge, ed., *Rethinking Government*, esp. pp. 45-51.

⁶ For a discussion of social policy in Canada, see C. Tuohy, 'Social Policy: Two Worlds,' in *ibid.*, pp. 275-305.

⁷ See Coleman, 'Macroeconomic Policy,' p. 233, and Dodge, 'How Government Operates,' esp. pp. 24-25. See also Thorsell, 'Canada Counts the Cost.'

In September 1994, the National Archives of Canada reduced the scope of its private records acquisition programme, arguing that 'archival resources are finite' and that the acquisition of private records must be determined 'in accordance with this reality.'⁸ The archives did not relinquish private-sector acquisition entirely, but it acknowledged that 'cooperation with other archival institutions is a significant factor,' and that in future it would only acquire private records 'in selected fields where precedence of acquisition has been well established.'⁹ But in 1995, faced with a budget cut of 16 percent, the archives withdrew from the acquisition of architectural, business, and religious records and the collection of the papers of senators and members of parliament. It also reduced the acquisition of graphic records and the archives of multicultural groups. It also closed the London Office of the Archives, which had been in operation for nearly 120 years.¹⁰

Many archivists have spoken frankly about the economic crisis facing archives. The national archivist, Jean-Pierre Wallot, has argued that it is increasingly difficult to fulfil all the requirements of government, such as the management of access to information legislation, with inadequate resources.¹¹ Sue Baptie at the City of Vancouver Archives has stated that, because of economic constraints, her institution is now the 'archives of last resort' for private records.¹² Anne MacDermaid, retired from Queen's University Archives, has looked back to the 'heydays' of the 1960s, saying that the downsizing of government, while forcing efficiency, can also 'amputate the limbs' of an archival programme.¹³

⁸ Canada, National Archives of Canada, 'Acquisition Strategy Framework: Private Sector' (Ottawa, ON: National Archives of Canada, 27 September 1994), p. 2. Copy obtained privately.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 3, 10.

¹⁰ Canada, National Archives of Canada, *1995-96 Estimates Part III Expenditure Plan* (Ottawa, ON: Supply and Services, 1995), p. 23, cited in Canada, National Archives of Canada, Policy Branch, 'NPT Discussion Paper: The Future of Private Records Acquisition in Canada,' November 1995, p. 3. Copy obtained privately.

¹¹ Canada, National Archives of Canada, *Annual Review of the National Archives of Canada 1991-1992* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1992), p. 8.

¹² Interview with Sue Baptie, 27 September 1993, transcript p. 18.

¹³ Interview with Anne MacDermaid, 3 November 1993.

Bob Stewart at the United Church of Canada British Columbia Conference Archives is pessimistic about the future for archives, commenting that, if budget cuts continue, the 1980s -- economically constrained in comparison with the 1960s and 1970s -- may some day be considered 'a golden age.'¹⁴ At the British Columbia Archives and Records Service, the deputy provincial archivist, Gary Mitchell, has stated that his institution simply no longer has a role to play in the management of private-sector records. 'The archives will not be an archival welfare office,' he has declared, 'and its staff will not be archival welfare workers.'¹⁵ He has claimed that a publicly funded institution must be accountable for its primary functions. 'What do you say,' he asks, 'to the archivist who acquires private acquisitions when their archives cannot fully make accessible vital government archives?'¹⁶

Public Accountability and Access to Information Legislation

Another reason for the decline in acquisition is the public sector's increasing responsibility to make 'vital government archives' accessible. The passage of access to information and protection of privacy legislation has required government repositories to ensure that public records are arranged, described, and available for public scrutiny, and that sensitive and personal records are protected from unauthorised use. In a time of limited resources, adherence to this statutory function has forced archives to limit expenditures in other areas, such as private records acquisition.¹⁷

¹⁴ Interview with Bob Stewart, 27 September 1993, transcript p. 24.

¹⁵ G. Mitchell, 'Private Acquisitions: Cut it Now or Cut it Later,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995, p. 10.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ Of course, the issue of access to information was not uniquely Canadian. The 1970s saw the proliferation of privacy and information legislation throughout the western world, including Sweden, Norway, Germany, and Denmark. These legislative initiatives are described in J. Knoppers, 'Freedom of Information and Privacy (Part I),' *ARMA Quarterly* 14, 4 (October 1980): 28-35, 55-56, and (Part II), *ARMA Quarterly* 15, 2 (April 1981): 18-32. For the purposes of this discussion 'access to information' shall be interpreted to mean both 'access to information' and 'protection of privacy,' unless otherwise noted. It is also important to note that, in this discussion, the protection of personal information is distinguished from other privacy issues, such as protection against media intrusion, physical searches, and so on. For example, British Columbia established a Privacy Act in 1968 and Manitoba one in 1970, but these acts referred not to information privacy but to other aspects of personal privacy. See J.M. Sharp, 'The Public Servant and the Right to Privacy,' *Canadian Public Administration* 14, 1 (Spring 1971): 59.

Nova Scotia was the first province, and the first Commonwealth administration, to establish a public right to access government documents.¹⁸ Federally, a Freedom of Information Act, Bill C-15, was introduced in parliament in October 1979, only to die with the defeat of the Conservative government. In July 1980, a revised Access to Information Act was introduced, passing into law in July 1983, accompanied by a separate Privacy Act.¹⁹ As of 1995, all ten provinces and two territories have passed some form of information legislation. Some provinces have incorporated privacy stipulations into their information legislation; others have passed separate privacy acts. Often the legislation encompasses both provincial and municipal or city governments; in some instances school boards, hospitals, universities, and other public agencies are also included.²⁰

Access to information legislation in Canada is premised on three key principles. The first is that government information should be publicly available. The second is that exceptions to the right of access must be specifically outlined. The third is that a body independent of the government will resolve any disputes about the disclosure of government information. The principles of privacy legislation require that no personal

¹⁸ Knoppers, 'Freedom of Information and Privacy (Part I),' p. 33.

¹⁹ Canada, *Access to Information Act*, 1980-81-82-83, c. 111, Sch. I '1', and Canada, *Privacy Act*, 1980-81-82-83, c. 111, Sch. 1 '19'.

²⁰ Discussion about access legislation began as early as January 1966, when a private bill was introduced into the House of Commons entitled 'An Act to better assure the Public's Rights to Freedom of Access for Public Documents and Information about Government Administration.' This act did not pass, but it did increase public and government awareness of access to information. Archival discussion of access to information began at the same time, when W. Kaye Lamb reported to the International Council on Archives in 1966 on the 'Liberalization of Restrictions on Access to Archives.' In this report, Lamb expressed concern for one of the paramount considerations in provision of access to records: 'the needs of the properly qualified and accredited scholar.' (See W.K. Lamb, Principal Reporter, *Liberalization of Restrictions on Access to Archives: General Survey*, International Council on Archives, Extraordinary Congress, First Working Session, 9-13 May 1955, NAC, CD 25 I5 E9 1966, vol. 1, File: ICA Congress/Lamb, pp. 4-7.) Access legislation became a significant issue federally in 1974, when a series of incidents of leaked government documents inflamed public concern over the control of public information and led to a formal investigation. Note that in British Columbia, the legislation applies to self-governing professional bodies and those community groups and societies governed by provincial legislation. This act provides a wider coverage than any other legislation in North America. The Northwest Territories legislation was passed in 1995 and will be implemented in 1997. Access legislation is discussed in more detail in D.A. Weber, 'Access to Public Records Legislation in North America: A Content Analysis,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994.

information will be collected by a government except for specific programme requirements. Further, the information collected must be obtained from the individual to whom it relates, who must be informed of the reason for collecting it. As well, people must have the right to review information about themselves and verify its accuracy.

These principles place a strong emphasis on the management of information by government. And information means records. The Canadian act provides 'a right of access to information *in records* under the control of a government institution.'²¹ In British Columbia, the purpose of the legislation is 'to make public bodies more accountable to the public and to protect personal privacy,' which will be done by 'giving the public a right of access to *records*.'²² In this new information regime, public archives -- the institutions responsible for their governments' records -- face a challenge to ensure the public records under their care or within their jurisdiction are identifiable and accessible. As they strive to fulfil these requirements in an economically restricted environment they have chosen to reduce or eliminate seemingly less urgent programmes, such as the acquisition of private records.

The Effect of Access Legislation on Private Records Acquisition

Access to information and protection of privacy legislation affects the acquisition of private records by public institutions in two critical ways. First, the administration of information legislation requires the establishment and maintenance of formalised records management programmes. In government archives with limited budgets, additional funding for records management has often had to come from a reduction in other programmes, such as acquisition. Second, access legislation forces archivists to emphasise the administrative and legal reasons for keeping records over the cultural or heritage benefits of their preservation. Not only can this limit the nature and extent of public records retained but it can also dictate against the acquisition of private records.

²¹ Canada, *Access to Information Act*, Section 2(1). Emphasis added.

²² British Columbia, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Pt. 1, Section 2(1)(a). Emphasis added.

Most access legislation requires that information be made available within a limited time, such as thirty days from the date of application. Finding the records is only the first step in a process which includes identifying information that cannot be released, severing that restricted information from the document, and releasing the unrestricted information. Many governments estimate that they must be able to find the information required within four working days in order to ensure completion of an access request within the time allotted.

To find a record or group of records within four working days requires a functioning records management programme. Records must be identified, classified, and accessible. As well, retention and disposition schedules are needed to document the control of information, particularly its destruction, in order to protect the agency from accusations of mismanagement. While many governments have established records management programmes, most often under the control of the public archival repository, they have never before had such an unavoidable legal requirement to provide public access to their records. In many governments, both the archives and the departments creating records have finally had to allocate resources to process backlogs of inaccessible records or complete the development of record schedules. In anticipation of the passage of access legislation, ad hoc systems have been replaced or new ones established in institution after institution. 'Archivists of today,' commented Alexander Wright at the provincial archives of British Columbia, 'must pay for the records management sins of the past.'²³

In the effort to accommodate to access legislation with limited resources, repositories have given records management a higher priority over other functions, such as private records acquisition. Wright has confirmed that, in British Columbia, private records acquisition is less and less central to the functions of the provincial archives. In that institution, prior to 1993, several archivists had been responsible for the acquisition

²³ A. Wright, 'British Columbia's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and Archival Acquisition at the BC Archives and Records Service,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995, p. 3.

and processing of private-sector records. By 1995, 'all these functions are performed by a single person, who also has other major duties.'²⁴ Wright has argued that an archival institution's first responsibility is to those records governed by the legislation; 'to acquire private donations of records that BCARS knew it could not or would not process and make available for the foreseeable future would be irresponsible.'²⁵

The statutory requirements of access legislation is also leading government and archives to reconsider the reasons for keeping records and the length of time required to preserve them. When determining which public records are retained, there is an increasing emphasis on the legal, financial, and administrative importance of records, rather than their informational value. Records management programmes have always been designed to remove unneeded records as soon as possible after their administrative life has ended, to allow for better preservation of valuable information. But with the controls imposed by access legislation, many records, particularly those containing sensitive or personal information, may be destroyed sooner, rather than later. As Wright has commented, 'there is a greater liability, financial and otherwise, associated with retaining records after their primary values have expired.'²⁶

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments have archival legislation in place to ensure that the administrative and historical values of records are reconciled and that valuable records are retained even after their administrative life has ended.²⁷ But similar archival legislation is not in effect in many government agencies affected by access legislation, such as most municipalities, regional districts, school boards, hospitals, or universities. In the absence of such controls, there have been instances where the implementation of access legislation has led to the destruction of records. Robin Keirstead, responsible for administering information legislation at the municipal level in Ontario, has argued that because 'there is no specific requirement to preserve any archival

²⁴ Ibid., p 6.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁷ See V. Bryans, 'Canadian Provincial and Territorial Archival Legislation: A Case Study of the Disjunction between Theory and Law,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989.

records other than by-laws and minutes records of potential value have been systematically destroyed.' Keirstead has claimed that Ontario experienced a 'dramatic increase' in the employment of private-sector shredding companies after the passage of access legislation.²⁸

Another example of the lack of control over records retention is the 'Bella Bella Beach bonfire' incident. In anticipation of the forthcoming access to information legislation in British Columbia, the administrator of a regional hospital in the community of Bella Bella ordered a maintenance worker to take eight boxes of confidential hospital records to the beach and burn them. The worker doused the records with fuel and set them on fire, only to have the local fire department arrive to extinguish the blaze, as fires were not allowed on public beaches. The records, left on the beach, were carried out to sea, washing onto shore again along the coast. People salvaging the records found they contained medical histories, adoption information, and other sensitive documentation.²⁹ Without adequate controls, many institutions such as this one are adopting radical methods for the reduction of their records burden. The preservation of records, whether institutional or not, is a low priority.

It is the archival repository that often manages the implementation and administration of access legislation. Some archivists consider this a boon to the profession. In 1983, John Smart, at the time an archivist at the National Archives of Canada, noted that 'it is to archivists whom the researching public will or should naturally come to seek the documents and information which they believe the legislation has made free to them.'³⁰ Don Page, the deputy director of the Historical Division of the federal Department of External Affairs, warned archivists to recognise the importance of the

²⁸ R.G. Keirstead, 'The Impact of Access and Privacy Legislation on Ontario's Municipal Archives,' *The Municipal Monitor* 25, 1 (February/March 1992): 7.

²⁹ 'Bungled Bonfire of Medical Records Fuels Call for Records Protection Law,' *FIPA Bulletin* (Fall 1994): 3.

³⁰ J. Smart, 'The Professional Archivist's Responsibility as an Advocate of Public Research,' *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 140.

legislation, urging them not to 'hide their heads' and hope that others would resolve the inevitable records management issues.³¹

However, others have expressed concern over the potential conflict between providing access to government information and securing a comprehensive and honest historical record in public archival repositories. Is it the job of the archivist to administer access legislation, or should this responsibility fall to the creating agency? The list of records exempt from access under the legislation could be long, which could limit the ability of archival institutions to serve researchers well.³² Allan Turner, formerly a provincial archivist in Saskatchewan and an assistant deputy minister in British Columbia, has suggested that access legislation could limit the availability of archival records. Yet, while there 'may be a flurry from the general public,' in response to the legislation, the use of records would then 'revert to the same sort of people who were doing the same kinds of research,' such as land claims or native rights. Archivists would end up having to divert existing resources to the administration of information legislation, losing ground, comparatively, in their traditional, mandated functions.³³ Access legislation became an urgent government imperative in the 1980s and 1990s, and in the search for methods for its management archives have had to limit expenditure on other activities, including acquisition.

Information Technology

Another factor affecting the archivist's traditional functions, and particularly the acquisition of private records, is the development of increasingly complex automation and telecommunications technologies. Such technologies have changed the way government and industry do business. Computers have had a particular effect on the nature of archival records and archival work. Their emergence has transformed the nature of information,

³¹ D. Page, 'The Access Dilemma,' *Archivaria* 8 (Summer 1979): 138.

³² See R.J. Bazillon, 'Access to Departmental Records, Cabinet Documents, and Ministerial Papers in Canada,' *The American Archivist* 43, 2 (Spring 1980): 151-60; see also Bazillon's update, 'Access to Government Information in Canada: Some Recent Developments,' *The American Archivist* 44, 2 (Spring 1981): 151-53.

³³ Interview with Allan Turner, 23 September 1993, transcript pp. 7, 21.

the speed with which it is generated, and the multitude of ways in which it can be manipulated.³⁴

The primary function of automated information systems -- of computers -- is to create, manage, manipulate, and disseminate *information*. Archival repositories, traditionally responsible for the management of readable, visible, recorded information, are now faced with having to identify and preserve information that is not readable, is not visible, and has not been recorded using traditional methods. The challenge in the new computer-oriented world is to make sense of the information resulting from it. The nature of electronic records is leading archives to focus more intensively on records management and on control over the creation of records, rather than on the acquisition of records -- electronic or paper-based -- created by external agencies.

Several qualities inherent in electronic records, qualities which differentiate them from paper-based records, affect their archival management. First, all electronically generated information is system dependent. It cannot be used without technical intervention. A paper document, a photograph, or a chart can be used simply by looking at it. Electronic information cannot be accessed without the aid of a technology, or, more precisely, without that particular configuration of computer hardware and software technologies that can read and access the particular information stored. Without a knowledge of, if not access to, the original software and hardware used to create an electronic record, access to the information is hindered. Without documentation explaining what information was created and for what reason, the electronic record can become meaningless. And the technologies used are continually being revised or upgraded. As a result, information systems, and the information held in them, can quickly become obsolete or inaccessible.

³⁴ This discussion is necessarily a brief introduction to the complexity of issues involved in information technology and electronic records management. For a detailed discussion of the nature of electronic records, see C.A. Bailey, 'Archival Theory and Machine Readable Records: Some Problems and Issues,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988 and H. Kandur, 'Management of Electronic Records,' Ph.D. dissertation, University College London, 1992.

A second concern is that electronic information is easily altered. This can endanger its integrity as a record. Paper-based information is static: once a memo or letter is completed, signed, and sent, it is considered a finished record and is filed and referenced as required. It becomes a snapshot of the actions, events, or thoughts of its creator as part of a particular transaction. If transferred to archival custody, it is preserved as evidence of that action and remains accessible in an unalterable state. But electronic information may be changed, updated, or deleted at will. And those changes may not in fact be made by one individual, or agency, or department, but by anyone with the authority to use the information for his own requirements. The electronic record *can* be copied and preserved as a snapshot, but to preserve such a record usually requires removing it from the software and hardware used to create it, which can diminish its administrative and research value. The integrity of electronic records, and their provenance or original order, are more difficult to identify and preserve than with paper-based records.

Finally, the emergence of electronic technologies has forced archives to distinguish clearly between information and records, a distinction they have not necessarily had to make in the past. In a paper-based system, copies of correspondence, reports, or other documents may be physically retained in their appropriate files. They form distinctly identifiable units, and their physical and informational properties do not change once they have been created. But not only can electronic information *be* a record; it can also *become* a record or come *from* a record. With electronic records, a physical document may not even exist. It may have been replaced by a code imbedded in a database or other software system indicating that a certain action has been taken or information communicated. An electronic database, for example, may serve both as a record and as the source of raw data. Preserving the electronic archival record requires identifying which item of information is or is not the actual record.

The Nature of Electronic Records and Private Records Acquisition

In order to ensure the preservation of valuable electronic records, archives have had to focus on the way the record is created, used, and maintained. Records management becomes essential. Douglas Brymner and Arthur Doughty were able to find records hidden in attics and lost in basements, records preserved as a result of, not in spite of, government neglect. Jenkinson's belief that the keeper of the records ought not to participate in appraisal made some sense in a time of limited records production and controllable filing systems. But archivists working at the end of the twentieth century cannot expect to find an electronic record, or to understand it, let alone 'keep' it, without playing a proactive records management role. Archival repositories are striving to establish records management systems to control both electronic and paper records, in an economic and political climate that emphasises government accountability and efficiency. As a result, they find that, again, they must give priority to records management over other activities, such as the acquisition of private records.

Jay Atherton, at the National Archives of Canada, has argued that electronic records are the catalyst to press archivists to recognise the need to manage all records from their creation. He has stated that:

With electronic data the stages in the life cycle cannot be separated. The nature and volatility of the recorded data will not permit it Obviously the archivist cannot wait, but must be involved even prior to the actual creation of the record.³⁵

In her Master of Archival Studies thesis for the University of British Columbia, Catherine Bailey has agreed with Atherton that archival and records management work ought to be integrated, even though this contradicts traditional archival practice. If archivists do not participate in the management of information soon after its creation, she maintains, the records themselves might not reach a second stage of appraisal. They might be destroyed, copied over, damaged, or otherwise lost. 'Archivists and records managers,' she has insisted, 'must accept the underlying principles of the continuum model ... both groups of

³⁵ J. Atherton, 'From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management -- Archives Relationship,' *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86): 47.

professionals should combine their skills, experience and efforts throughout the entire process of records keeping.³⁶

Luciana Duranti, at the University of British Columbia, has argued for an even greater expansion of the archivist's role. Archivists, she claims, must participate in the *development* of electronic information systems. They must determine which records should be retained, then imbed this information into the structure of the information system, so that the computer will automatically distinguish records from information and ensure that records are preserved as required. Without such active involvement by archivists, Duranti contends, electronic information will be irretrievably lost.³⁷

This strong emphasis on a proactive role in the management of electronic records has led public archives away from acquisition. Again they see it as a matter of priorities. Public archives risk losing electronic information generated by their governments if they do not participate in records management. And those electronic records are, in the eyes of the law, information governed by access legislation. With limited public resources, repositories have determined that priority must be given to these more pressing concerns, rather than to optional activities such as private records acquisition.

It is also true that, if archivists accept that electronic records cannot be well managed except within a records management programme, then the acquisition of electronic records from sources other than the sponsor agency is in fact not logical. An agency interested in the preservation of its electronic records would likely establish its own records management programme, with its own institutional archives. While in the past public repositories might have been willing to bear the expense of acquiring and preserving paper-based records from the private sector, they are likely not prepared to pay for the intensive records management necessary to acquire an acceptable electronic record from a source other than their own institution. It could be argued that the acquisition of electronic records created by agencies other than its sponsor agency will increasingly fall outside an archives' sphere of responsibility.

³⁶ Bailey, 'Archival Theory and Machine Readable Records,' pp. 56, 61-62, 69.

³⁷ Interview with Luciana Duranti, 15 December 1993.

Some archivists have argued that electronic records management actually conspires against the acquisition by an archival agency of *any* electronic records, whether privately generated or created by its own sponsor agency. The American archival consultant David Bearman has argued that, if various departments and agencies of an organisation all create their own electronic records for their own use, it may be impractical, if not impossible, for a centralised archival repository to acquire these records physically and manage them centrally for either administrative or reference purposes. He has argued that electronic records are:

organizationally beyond the control of custodial archivists; they are professionally outside the experience of archivists; the economics of their custody undermines traditional repositories; and the culture of electronic records creation makes them more vulnerable to destruction by their creators and thus raises the importance of requiring creators to assume responsibility for their care.³⁸

Bearman has suggested that archives must abandon their 'custodial identity, assumptions, and methods of operation.' The managers of archives need to see themselves not as custodians but as policy makers or auditors, or else they risk being 'politically irrelevant, professionally inadequate, economically unaffordable, and culturally ineffective.'³⁹

In an effort to develop systems for the management of electronic records, a number of Canadian archivists have undertaken research in the field. In 1983, the National Archives of Canada (then the Public Archives) and the Department of Communications of the federal government set up an Office Communications Systems Field Trial Program, to study the impact of technology on the archival and corporate management of information.⁴⁰ Following that, the National Archives began the Information Management and Office Systems Advancement (IMOSA) project in December 1989. This project was directed by the Government Records Branch of the

³⁸ D. Bearman, 'An Indefensible Bastion: Archives as a Repository in the Electronic Age,' in D. Bearman, ed., *Archival Management of Electronic Records, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 13* (1991): 23.

³⁹ Ibid., 16, 22-23.

⁴⁰ Publications include Canada, Public Archives of Canada, *The Machine Readable Archives: An Overview of its Operations and Procedures* (Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services, 1980), and Canada, Public Archives of Canada, *Guidelines for the Scheduling of Data in Automated Systems* (Ottawa, ON: Public Archives of Canada, 1986).

Archives in collaboration with the Canadian Workplace Automation Research Centre of the Department of Communications. The project aimed to bring together various organisations to consider the impact of technology on office systems.⁴¹

In 1995, John McDonald, director of the Information Management Standards and Practices Division of the archives, suggested that one of the most important results of the IMOSA project was the recognition that the development of office system technologies was a slow evolution, not a dramatic revolution. The study showed that individuals within government offices have retained control over their own electronic information systems. Centralised administration of information management is slow to implement. Consequently the environment of office automation is, in McDonald's words, a 'wild frontier,' a world without standards or regulations. He proposed that the most useful office systems technologies of the future will allow record keeping to be linked with general office practice. Records management will not be a separate application or function, he argued, 'but something that is interwoven with the normal conduct of the business functions and activities of an organization.'⁴²

⁴¹ The IMOSA project was divided into three phases. Phase One involved developing and testing test a prototype application, available on computers connected through local area networks, which allowed users to search for, file, and retrieve information and records throughout the organisation, while allowing the records manager to control and manage both electronic and non-electronic records. This phase resulted in a recognition of the need to distinguish between records and information, to define electronic records, to develop guidelines for information management, and to determine adequate standards for the management of electronic information. Phase Two of the project involved an enhancement of the requirements identified in Phase One. These requirements for 'corporate information management application' or CIMA would be documented in a series of user-oriented guides. One of the guides addressed information technology standards, and the other provided users with advice on how to build and use file directories to conform with controlled electronic and non-electronic filing systems. Phase Three consisted of a variety of research projects designed to explore issues related to the CIMA requirements. These included such tasks as surveying vendors of information management software to determine the inclusion in their systems of mechanisms to manage electronic documents and producing a checklist of basic functional requirements for electronic records management. Other projects included surveying the state of information management in the federal government and studying the role of thesauri in the management of government information. For information on IMOSA, see John McDonald, *Information Management and Office Systems Advancement (IMOSA): An Overview* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, May 1993). See also John McDonald, 'The National Archives and Office Systems,' *Records Management Journal* 1, 4 (1990).

⁴² J. McDonald, 'Managing Records in the Modern Office: Taming the Wild Frontier,' *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995): 75.

In 1994, Luciana Duranti and her UBC colleague Terry Eastwood received a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to conduct a three-year investigation of 'the preservation of the integrity of electronic records.' The project is based on the assumption that the identification of methods for managing electronic information systems must be grounded in universal principles and concepts. The goals of the project are to identify those principles and concepts. The objectives include providing a definition of records, identifying the types of electronic systems that generate records, and identifying the mechanisms required for ensuring the preservation of records within those electronic systems. The researchers plan to conclude the project with the publication of a book describing the research aims, assumptions, methodology, and findings.⁴³

Archival Reaction to a Changing World

Electronic records, access to information legislation, and economic restraints have all combined to lead public repositories to reconsider their role in the acquisition of private records. The archival community has renewed discussion about its proper role and functions. The questions raised are those that archivists have considered since the beginning of archival work in Canada. Is the archivist responsible for the records of the sponsor agency? In this case, he would have a significant role to play in the creation, administration, and preservation of records throughout their life. Is the archivist also

⁴³ See L. Duranti and T. Eastwood, 'Protecting Electronic Evidence: A Progress Report on a Research Study and its Methodology,' *Archivi & Computer* 3 (1995): 213-50. A comparable project was initiated at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1993, funded by a grant of US \$360,000 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The purpose of this project is to conduct an analysis of the functional requirements for record-keeping systems for electronic records management. Led by an interdisciplinary team from the fields of librarianship, information management, and archival studies, the project undertakes to study five specific issues: the record-keeping requirements for electronic information systems; organisational variables that affect the use of hardware or software and, consequently, those functional requirements being studied; the capabilities of software products to assist with record-keeping requirements; the need for policies and standards; and the role and effectiveness of strategies for technology and policy to ensure archival interests are met. Work was to be completed by January 1996. For more information, see R.J. Cox, 'University of Pittsburgh Research Prospectus: Variables in the Satisfaction of Recordkeeping Requirements for Electronic Records Management,' 2 August 1993, copy obtained privately.

responsible for the records of society? If so, he would have to look beyond his administrative and records management roles to add the job of acquiring and preserving those records created outside of his sponsor agency but related to it or to his particular social or geopolitical environment. The issue has prompted strong debate.

The Archivist as Records Administrator

According to Terry Eastwood, archivists are ‘servants of evidence.’⁴⁴ They are compelled to preserve records for their evidential value, not for any informational or cultural qualities. The archivist has a duty to protect records from corruption, and so archival practices must ‘preserve impartiality.’⁴⁵ For records to be trustworthy, they must be managed from their creation in such a way that their potential for accountability is protected.⁴⁶ ‘From the archivist’s perspective and need,’ Eastwood has claimed, ‘archives are not historical source material.’⁴⁷

Eastwood has promoted a definition of records that emphasises this evidential value. Duranti and Eastwood have defined records as ‘documents that are made or received by a physical or juridical person in the course of its practical activity.’ (A juridical person, they explain, is a succession or collection of physical persons; a physical person is a human being capable of acting legally.) They claim that records and archives are the same thing. The archival fonds is ‘the whole of the reliable, authentic, usable, comprehensive and compact records of one records creator.’ ‘Non-records’ consists of ‘any document that is not archival.’⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Eastwood, ‘Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal,’ in B.L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, ON: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), p. 74.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Also emphasised in the interview with Terry Eastwood, 14 December 1993. For a discussion of the issue of accountability, see J. Parkinson, ‘Accountability in Archival Science,’ M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1993.

⁴⁷ T. Eastwood, ‘What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?,’ pp. 9-10.

⁴⁸ Duranti and Eastwood, ‘Protecting Electronic Evidence,’ Appendix D. See also T. Liverton, ‘Public Records: A Study in Archival Theory,’ M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991.

Eastwood has identified five properties of records, each of which is essential to ensure their reliability as evidence: impartiality, authenticity, naturalness, interrelatedness, and uniqueness. According to Eastwood, recognition of these properties is essential to the preservation of a true record. Two qualities, impartiality and authenticity, are particularly important. Impartiality, Eastwood argues, is 'freedom from ideology other than that inherent in creation.' Impartiality can only be achieved if records are appraised and retained according to the administrative needs of the creating agency. The potential use and interpretation of records by anyone other than the creating agency are of 'no consequence' to appraisal.⁴⁹

For a record to be authentic, it must serve as evidence that an event took place. Therefore it cannot be 'tampered with' or 'engineered with posterity in mind.'⁵⁰ To protect the record it must remain in 'continuous proceduralized custody' throughout its life. Those records taken out of the hands of their legitimate custodians suffer impaired 'evidentiary property.'⁵¹ After all, the appraisal criteria used by any agency other than the sponsor would impose an ideology distinct from that of the sponsor; the record would lose its purity. Implicit in Eastwood's definition of records is the fact that the acquisition of records from external agencies will invalidate the evidential quality of archival materials, a quality he sees as paramount in the archival process.

Other archivists agree with this perspective. Heather MacNeil, a graduate of the University of British Columbia, has stressed three components of Hilary Jenkinson's vision of archives. Archives, she claims, are evidence of actions of which they formed a part. The primary obligation of archivists is to protect the integrity of that evidence. Therefore, to protect that integrity, archivists must protect the impartiality of the records.⁵² MacNeil has argued that archivists must accept this theoretical basis before they can adapt to the changing requirements of modern archival work. Another graduate

⁴⁹ Eastwood, 'What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?', p. 13.

⁵⁰ T. Eastwood, 'Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal,' pp. 74-75.

⁵¹ Eastwood, 'What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important?', pp. 13-14.

⁵² H. MacNeil, 'Keynote Address: Between Two Paradigms,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, St. John's, Newfoundland, July 1993, p. 9.

of the University of British Columbia, David Weber, has acknowledged that this redefinition of archival work 'will certainly be met with resistance from those that are content with the historical archives tradition.' Ultimately, he asserts, the archivist's duty to preserve evidence will force the profession 'to transcend this restrictive posture in favour of a broader, and it is to be hoped, more effective stance.'⁵³

Chris Hives, also a graduate of the Master of Archival Studies Programme, and in 1995 the president of the Canadian Council of Archives, has also emphasised the administrative requirements of record keeping. He has argued against the 'narrow,' 'historical' view of the archival profession. Complaining that the historical perspective is 'outmoded' and has had 'limited past contributions,' Hives has concluded that 'the management of corporate information is the single most important skill which the archivist might be able to offer to the corporate world.'⁵⁴

Duranti has expressed disapproval of the Canadian archival community's vision that archivists are responsible for society's '*cultural* heritage.' She has claimed that 'the bulk of the archival material presently in the custody of the archival institutions of the western world is preserved because of accountability.'⁵⁵ To Duranti, the archivist has provided a vital service throughout history, as 'the societal officer responsible for maintaining the essential values of his or her society by preserving the evidence of its actions and transactions.' Only by 'serving the polis,' by guaranteeing their rights, can archivists serve people. She argues that 'it is against the impartial and innocent nature of archives to instigate the records creators to generate records of activities which have an

⁵³ D.A. Weber, 'Access to Public Records Legislation in North America: A Content Analysis,' M.A.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994, p. 132.

⁵⁴ C. Hives, 'Records, Information, and Archives Management in Business,' *ARMA Quarterly* 20, 1 (January 1986): 4, 7. Archivists were not alone in turning toward information management. Librarians had been seeking to incorporate information as a component of their work and their education for many years. In 1986, Jean Tague and Jill Austin noted that in twenty years, at least forty-six of sixty-six academic institutions accredited by the American Library Association had added the word 'information' to their titles. In Canada, five of the seven existing schools had made a similar change. J. Tague and J. Austin, 'From Librarian to Information Scientist: Educational Directions for a Changing Profession,' *Canadian Journal of Information Science* 11 (1986): 24.

⁵⁵ Luciana Duranti, 'ACA 1991 Conference Overview,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Banff, Alberta, June 1991, pp. 2-3, 6. Copy obtained privately.

oral nature, or to maintain records of activities that do not serve accountability in its broadest sense, and legal, operational, and organizational needs.’⁵⁶

If the archivist becomes a records administrator, as these archivists suggest, then the focus of his responsibility naturally becomes the management of the records of his sponsor agency. This is an inescapable conclusion to the definition of records as evidence of actions. The acquisition of records from sources other than the sponsor agency is not a valid archival action. According to the definition presented, the archival quality of a record -- its value as evidence and its use for accountability -- is directly linked to the management of the record throughout its life. If records must be impartial, then they cannot be acquired or managed by agencies that would impose value judgements distinct from the administrative requirements of record keeping. Otherwise the record would not be free from an external ideology. If records are to remain authentic, they must be in ‘continuous proceduralized custody.’ The acquisition of records by other agencies risks breaking this continuous custody, damaging the authenticity.

The Collectivity of Institutional Repositories

Eastwood has suggested that if archivists follow this understanding of archival practice, the collective archival record will be well managed and society well served. In his model, each institutional archives will be responsible for the records of its sponsor agency. The entirety would then serve to secure the documentary memory of society without any individual agency having to take responsibility for any other agency’s records. A complex of institutional archives would ensure that a wide range of records are preserved. Archivists would serve as ‘the public memory keeper’; by acting ‘individually in institution-specific contexts throughout any given society Collectively they then serve a public and communal function as documentary memory keeper and facilitator.’⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 6, 7, 9.

⁵⁷ Eastwood, ‘Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal,’ p. 80.

Hives has argued that the acquisition of private records by public agencies cannot be justified, in light of the continuing custodial expenses and the institution's 'primary responsibility' for its own record. With changing bureaucratic priorities and limited resources, the cultural orientation of archives have 'of necessity' been replaced by an administrative perspective. Hives has argued against the acquisition of private records by public agencies, claiming that such acquisition means continuing custodial expenses for public repositories, difficult to justify in light of the growing 'primary responsibility' for the institutional record. Instead, Hives has also advocated an increase in the number of repositories responsible for their own records. This 'collective or shared' responsibility for private-sector records, he has claimed, is a natural evolution of the 'total archives' concept.⁵⁸

The Archivist as Records Advocate

Many Canadian archivists do not accept the role of archivist solely as institutional records administrator. They believe that records ought to be retained for more than their value as evidence. Further, they are not confident that institutions will naturally and inevitably care for their records *and* make them available for public scrutiny. While the preservation of records for accountability is valid, these archivists argue that this criteria must be combined with a broader appraisal of records for their societal value. The archivist has a central role as the advocate of society's documentary heritage.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ C. Hives, 'Thinking Globally, Acting Locally,' *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994): 157-60.

⁵⁹ The argument is not found just in Canada. An American archivist John Roberts, in his rebuttal of Eastwood's paper presenting a definition of records, has offered a forthright criticism of Eastwood's theoretical vision. He has claimed that Eastwood's five properties of archives are simply 'an elaborate restatement of a single concept: provenance.' Roberts has suggested that 'archival theory -- when it goes beyond a point of diminishing returns -- is inflated, pretentious, and virtually useless.' He has claimed that the urge for a theory came directly out of the profession's need for 'standards and recognition,' and effort 'to establish independence and status for the archival profession and a struggle to determine what groups will dominate the profession.' 'Theory,' he has noted, 'as a tool to achieve professional status, can be tied to very self-interested goals.' J.W. Roberts, 'Practice Makes Perfect, Theory Makes Theorists,' presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, St. John's, Newfoundland, July 1993, pp. 1, 3, 14-15. Copy obtained privately.

Terry Cook has suggested that the redefinition of the archival profession toward information management is a threat to the independent role of the archivist as scholar of the historical record. He has agreed that 'historian-archivists' ought not deny the legitimate tools offered by professions such as records management or librarianship, nor should they ignore the impact of the information revolution on record keeping. However, archivists must, he has argued, serve as historians of the record. They must move beyond information management to 'search for, and lead others to seek, "knowledge" and meaning among the records in their care.'⁶⁰ He has claimed that 'to deny or even to downplay the informational or secondary value of records simply reduces archives to registry offices and archivists to records managers.'⁶¹ To Cook, archivists are in the 'understanding business' not the 'information business.' To serve society well they must turn 'from being passive recipients of institutional records to becoming active documenters of the past.'⁶² While he agrees that with the advent of records management the archivist can become the agency's 'chief information officer,' he urges archivists not to confuse the archival and records management agendas.⁶³ They must not confuse 'administrative means with cultural ends.'⁶⁴

At the University of Manitoba, Tom Nesmith has offered a holistic perspective to archival work. He has argued that, in order to handle the dramatic growth in documentation in recent times, archivists must understand the context of archival work, which requires an understanding not just of records but of records creators and archival functions.⁶⁵ He has expressed concern that the 'distinctive archival role' is being

⁶⁰ T. Cook, 'From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives,' *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85): esp. p. 49.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 30, 33.

⁶² T. Cook, 'Rites of Passage: The Archivist in the Information Age,' *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91): 176.

⁶³ Interview with Terry Cook, 12 October 1993, esp. transcript pp. 2-3, 9, 16.

⁶⁴ T. Cook, 'From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives,' p. 29.

⁶⁵ T. Nesmith, 'Hugh Taylor's Contextual Idea for Archives and the Foundation of Graduate Education in Archival Studies,' in B.L. Craig ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992): 13-37.

‘overshadowed’ by allied communications, technological, and information professions.⁶⁶

Nesmith has urged archivists to recognise and respect the intellectual aspects of their work, particularly in the areas of appraisal, description, and public relations. He has emphasised that:

the study of archives is very much a study of human beings (including archivists) and why and how they act when recording, keeping records, and placing, using, and perceiving them in archives. It is in large part the study of people and their institutions interacting with recorded memory.⁶⁷

Hugh Taylor has long advocated this holistic role. He has acknowledged that North American archives experienced what he has called an ‘historical shunt,’ moving away from the European tradition of a close connection with agencies of government and orienting themselves more toward information and research. He has suggested that, faced with new information technologies, archivists at the end of the twentieth century again have to reconsider their place in the records continuum.⁶⁸ Taylor saw Jenkinson’s passive approach to appraisal and acquisition as the product of ‘the great era of industrial bureaucracy.’ To Taylor, Jenkinson was just ‘a bureaucrat doing his bureaucratic thing.’ Taylor has suggested that the time for a passive approach was long over. Today’s archivist must be an advocate and mediator; someone who will ‘be going out there and fighting for the preservation of records.’⁶⁹

Brien Brothman has suggested that it is in the nature of the archivist to impose order on the environment. Seeking to ensure that ‘things are in their proper place,’ archivists impose a value on archival records by their decision to retain or destroy. They work to civilise the ‘documentary wilderness.’ Brothman urges archivists to recognise that documents and records are not organic; they have no ‘natural place’; archivists themselves impose order through the process of information management. But, argues Brothman, archivists manage information for a cultural purpose, and those who see the

⁶⁶ T. Nesmith, ‘“Professional Education in the Most Expansive Sense”: What Will the Archivist Need to Know in the 21st Century?’, presentation to the Association of Canadian Archivists, Regina, Saskatchewan, June 1995, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶⁸ H.A. Taylor, ‘Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s,’ *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984): 25-37.

⁶⁹ Interview with Hugh Taylor, 24 September 1993, esp. transcript pp. 9-10.

lure of information management as a means to economic and professional security risk losing their cultural awareness. This, he claims, is 'tantamount to professional irresponsibility.' 'The history of the record,' Brothman concludes, 'does not stop at the portals of archives. Archives are participants in that history.'⁷⁰

Allan Turner has emphasised the archivist's role as a trustee. 'Trusteeship should go beyond professional archivists just as it goes beyond the teacher in the school to a board of trustees, just as it goes beyond a museum, just as it goes in hospitals -- a hospital administrator might not necessarily be a doctor, but I think it takes more than doctors to run hospitals and get support for them; it takes dedicated people and councils to run them, all across so many professions. Why do we tarry along in archives to think we can do it ourselves?'⁷¹

Bob Stewart, at the United Church Archives in British Columbia, said that 'I think you have to be enthusiastic about the history and the whole context from which the records have arisen, and in some sense have enough of an historical sensibility to respect the records, to see them, as I almost do, as some kind of a witness to the living church ... they are in some sense a vital part of who we are as a body today.'⁷² Bennett McCardle, at the Archives of Ontario, has stated her perspective more plainly; she has simply urged that archivists recognise their 'broader moral responsibility.'⁷³

The Importance of Acquisition

Those archivists who see their role as records advocate have argued that the preservation of a wide range of archival materials, both public and private, is necessary to ensure societal needs are met. In order to document society's memory, archival repositories have a responsibility not just for their own institutional record. The

⁷⁰ Brien Brothman, 'Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice,' *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991): esp. 80-84. 90-91.

⁷¹ Interview with Allan Turner, 23 September 1993, transcript p. 34.

⁷² Interview with Bob Stewart, 27 September 1993, transcript p. 18.

⁷³ Interview with Bennett McCardle, 4 November 1993.

acquisition of records from other creators remains valid. Otherwise, society loses the balanced picture of its past afforded by a variety of different perspectives.

Marcel Caya, at the time the University Archivist at McGill University Archives, has claimed that the acquisition of non-sponsor records plays an integral part in any institution's archival programme. He sees the archival repository as the memory of an institution, and that memory cannot be complete with only the records of the institution's administration. The acquisition of private records ensures the preservation of a comprehensive memory of the institution. Without a wide range of records, there is no evidence of the context within which an organisation operates.⁷⁴

Carman Carroll, the provincial archivist of Nova Scotia, has indicated that his institution is responsible for the records of the *people* of Nova Scotia, not just the *government* of Nova Scotia. He has claimed that, beyond the research value of preserving private records, there are compelling legal and evidential reasons for protecting and providing access to non-governmental records. He has cited the example of the provincial inquiry in the 1990s into the use by Nova Scotia hospitals of blood infected with the HIV virus. He has indicated that, without public access to the records of the Red Cross and similar private agencies, the facts behind the decisions not to test such blood before use would not be available. The government records alone would not tell the entire story. To Carroll, the archives must recognise the difference between documenting 'government' and 'governance.'⁷⁵

Hugh Taylor has stated his hope that the archivist would return to being a keeper of the memory, working with museums, historic sites, and other groups to preserve not just a corporate record but the memory of a community in all its forms.⁷⁶ He has often advocated that archivists look beyond the administrative nature of bureaucratic records. Instead, he has urged them to preserve a wide variety of information, from documentary art to oral history to archivist-run photographic collections. To Taylor, 'there is much that

⁷⁴ Interview with Marcel Caya, 29 October 1993, transcript p. 5.

⁷⁵ Interview with Carman Carroll, 11 August 1994.

⁷⁶ Interview with Hugh Taylor, 24 September 1993.

archives administer which is not strictly archival.’⁷⁷ In particular, he has encouraged archivists to broaden their role to adapt to the new ‘conceptual orality’ of society, as oral and written communication combine through the use of advanced electronic technologies.⁷⁸

In 1994, a lone historian entered the acquisition debate. Robert McDonald, at the University of British Columbia, wrote to the British Columbia archival association protesting the decline in private records acquisition by public repositories. McDonald expressed his concern for ‘the tide of diminishing commitment by ... publicly-funded institutions to collect private records.’ He suggested that all those who believed in the importance of private records to society ‘must become more vocal.’⁷⁹ He lamented the turn away from a recognition of the wider societal value of archival records, criticising archivists for ‘losing sight’ of their cultural responsibilities.⁸⁰

Private Records Acquisition in 1995

As of 1995, the Canadian Council of Archives had cancelled its acquisition planning; and public repositories seemed to be emphasising institutional archival work over acquisition. Could it be that public repositories considered the burgeoning number of local archives as best placed to care for their records? If so, then it would be logical for public agencies to assume a leadership role, as the National Archives had adopted with the revisions to its legislation. But if local archives, the majority of them community-

⁷⁷ H.A. Taylor, ‘The Totemic Universe: Appraising the Documentary Future,’ in C. Hives, ed., *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice -- Proceedings of the Joint Meeting of the Association of British Columbia Archivists and the Northwest Archivists, 1990* (Vancouver, BC: Archives Association of British Columbia, 1990): 15-29. For a discussion by Taylor of the broader role for archivists, see for example Taylor’s publications on ‘Oral History and Archives: Keynote Speech to the 1976 Canadian Oral History Conference,’ *Canadian Oral History Journal* 2 (1976-77): 1-5; ‘Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist,’ *The American Archivist* 42 (October 1979): 417-28; and ‘The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage,’ *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-83): 118-30. Taylor’s writings are reviewed and identified in J.K. Burrows and M.A. Pylypchuk, ‘The Writings of Hugh Taylor: A Bibliographic Review,’ Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination*, pp. 244-59.

⁷⁸ H.A. Taylor, quoted in T. Cook, ‘Mind over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal,’ in Craig, *The Archival Imagination*, p. 39.

⁷⁹ R.A.J. McDonald, ‘Who Is Preserving Private Records?,’ *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994): 155-57.

⁸⁰ R.A.J. McDonald, ‘Acquiring and Preserving Private Records: Cultural Versus Administrative Perspectives,’ *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994): 162-63.

based and acquisition-oriented, were the best agencies for the preservation of local records, why would the CCA not devote money to coordinating their acquisition efforts? While the CCA's budget, like those of other funding agencies, has been reduced over time, the cuts do not explain the elimination of one particular programme while others are simply reduced or revised. It would appear the CCA also considered institutional repositories, not acquisition-oriented archives, the best agencies for the preservation of society's records. As it had done several times in the past, the archival community sought clarification of its orientation.

On 7-8 December 1995, the National, Provincial, and Territorial Archivists Conference met in Ottawa to consider 'the plight of the private record.' In the National Archives of Canada's discussion paper circulated before the meeting, it was clear that the National Archives at least believed in the validity of preserving a wide range of public and private records, claiming that the two types of records were 'complementary components of our archival heritage.'⁸¹ The Archives accepted that the private record was threatened by new economic realities and the consequent re-engineering of government programmes. But it rejected a strict adherence to accountability and proclaimed its belief in the importance of preserving a wide range of records:

Society benefits from the preservation of the most complete and comprehensive record of its history and future generations would be impoverished if the acquisition of private records were to be abandoned.⁸²

The question raised in the discussion paper was one of responsibility. The National Archives acknowledged that 'from a legal perspective,' responsibility for private records is held by the national, provincial, and territorial archives. This was stated either explicitly or implicitly in their archival legislation. However, because acquisition was not limited to government agencies, there was a question of the balance between public and non-public responsibility. The National Archives offered its opinion:

⁸¹ Canada, National Archives of Canada, 'The Future of Private Records Acquisition,' p. 1. The National, Provincial, and Territorial Archivists Conference changed its name from the Dominion, Provincial, and Territorial Archivists Committee with the renaming of the National Archives in 1987.

⁸² Ibid.

If archival records can be considered as part of the cultural assets of a particular region, then the government can be seen to have some responsibility for ensuring the preservation of private records for the public good The government therefore has a responsibility towards the archival records of all its constituents, especially those not in a position to maintain their own archives.⁸³

The National-Provincial-Territorial Archives Conference drafted a resolution on private sector records, in which it affirmed its belief that 'private records, in all media, are an essential part of our common heritage,' and that 'the Canadian Archival System must provide for the safekeeping of private records of enduring value.' The conference members agreed that they had a responsibility to provide leadership and coordination within their own jurisdictions, 'to ensure the preservation of a balanced record of our society for posterity.'⁸⁴ While recognising the administrative functions of archival agencies, the nation's leading public repositories have proclaimed their commitment to a broader cultural purpose behind the preservation of archival records, including those within and outside of direct public control. The essence of total archives, and the essence of the archival system -- the belief in public responsibility for the preservation of society's documentary heritage -- was once again affirmed.

Conclusion

A variety of societal factors are affecting the role of public repositories in the acquisition of private records. In light of tightening economies and changing priorities, governments have sought ways to reduce public spending. Across the board cuts to programmes have left public archives responsible for establishing priorities and eliminating discretionary activities. The largesse of the past half century had, by 1995, given way to a leaner public sector, anxious to reduce its responsibility for all but essential programmes. The acquisition of private records became a lower priority for many public institutions.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸⁴ National, Provincial, and Territorial Archives Conference, 'NPT Draft Resolution on Private Sector Records,' unpublished draft, 8 December 1995. Copy obtained privately.

In light of restricted resources, archival repositories have had to establish priorities. Their first priority has become service to government and compliance with statutory obligations. These include the provision of access to government records, required by access to information legislation. In order to fulfil the strict demands of such legislation with the limited funds available, government archives have had to reduce their involvement with discretionary programmes, including private records acquisition.

At the same time, the growing importance of electronic records has led to a revision of the role of archives in the preservation of information, particularly in the public sector. In order to preserve public records in electronic format, records which are also covered by access legislation, archives have had to take a proactive role in records management, even going so far as to seek participation in the creation of records systems. This work has left little in the way of time or resources for private records acquisition.

In response to these changes in society and the record, archivists have reconsidered the nature and purpose of records and record keeping. Some archivists have advocated a stronger administrative role for the profession, offering a definition of archives that emphasises their evidential value. They have suggested that, in order to serve accountability, records must retain their authenticity and impartiality. To retain these qualities, and therefore to serve as evidence, records must be preserved by their creating agencies or legitimate successors, in continuous custody. The archivist must serve as records administrator. Implicit in that view is a rejection of the validity of acquiring records from other sources.

Other archivists have expressed concern about the growing institutional orientation of archival work. Archival records, they insist, must be kept for reasons other than evidence and accountability. They serve the public in a variety of ways. To that end the acquisition of records by agencies other than the sponsor agency must be considered valid, and the archivist worked as a records advocate. Otherwise the body of records that comprise society's documentary memory are kept for the benefit of individual administrations, most of which are under no obligation to share that information for the

benefit of society as a whole. There is an unacceptable social risk to devolving responsibility to the individual or institutional level.

In December 1995, the National, Provincial, and Territorial Archivists Conference agreed that there was a public responsibility to ensure the preservation of a 'balanced record' of society. This meant that both public and private records were worth preserving and making publicly available. They all formed part of society's memory. The institutional and administrative realities of record keeping were legitimate, but the ultimate value of records was to society as a whole. The policy of preserving archival records for their societal value has been affirmed.

In an age of information overload, economic stringency, and public accountability, the question then becomes, how can the archival community secure those records that might not otherwise be protected? Whose job is it to preserve those records that fall outside of archival statutes, or access legislation, or institutional mandates? How can archivists ensure society's documentary memory is preserved?

CONCLUSION

FAR GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS:

ARCHIVES AND THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY

[Archives are] a great storehouse of the history of the colonies and colonists in their political, ecclesiastical, industrial, domestic, in a word in every aspect of their lives as communities.

Douglas Brymner, 1890¹

Archives are utilitarian. They aid the performance of purposeful activity.

Terry Eastwood, 1992²

The way in which Canadians perceive archival records and archival institutions has changed markedly in the last one hundred years. Today, the record is valued more for accountability and legal evidence and less for research and information. As a result, the purpose behind managing records is becoming more utilitarian than social. The decisions involved in the preservation of records are increasingly pragmatic, less intellectual.

An increasing number of Canada's public archival repositories are focusing their energies on the management of their sponsor's institutional record. They are identifying

¹ Canada. Archives. *Report on Canadian Archives* (Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer, 1890), pp. xv.

² 'Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal,' in Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, ON: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), p. 73.

themselves more as an administrative arm of the government they serve and less as a place for public research or scholarship. These institutions are naturally more concerned with the records management requirements of their sponsor agency, with the implementation of access legislation, and with the management of the electronic record, than with the acquisition and preservation of non-institutional records.

The Canadian Council of Archives was established in part to relieve public institutions of the burden of caring for all of society's records. The CCA has become the primary funding agency for archives, supporting smaller organisational, institutional, or community institutions. Since 1985, it has provided financial support for the organisation, description, and conservation of records, both institutional and non-institutional. But the CCA has also encouraged a greater institutional focus to archival work. It has declined to support the development of acquisition strategies or an acquisition network among repositories. The president of the CCA has argued that acquisition is not an appropriate archival function, particularly for publicly funded repositories. Funds are better spent, he has claimed, assisting institutions to manage their own records or to develop descriptive and communications systems.

Advocates of an institutional vision of archives argue that records management will protect the authenticity and integrity of an agency's records. Society will benefit from the existence of a complex of these institutional archives. The public costs associated with archival preservation will be reduced, as the private sector takes responsibility for its own records. The quality of records retained will rise as each agency is able to concentrate on the care of its own records rather than on the acquisition of a range of records it cannot afford to process and preserve. Some archivists argue that the institutional orientation of archival agencies is not just desirable but essential. Records acquired by or maintained by anyone other than the creating agency risk losing their essential authenticity and integrity; they are not archival records.

A century ago, Douglas Brymner and Arthur Doughty perceived the publicly funded repository as the nation's treasure house. The archivist's function was to add to this treasure by seeking out and collecting relevant information, regardless of its nature or

origin. Canada's history, and its sense of national identity, depended on the widest range possible of historical materials, archival, artifactual, or other.

How can the perception of the nature and purpose of archives -- records and institutions -- have changed so dramatically? The reality is that the archival function naturally and inevitably evolves, as the form and nature of the archival record, and society's use of it, is altered over time. Technology redefines a society's communications and interactions and, consequently, its very culture and civilisation. If archival records are the documentary detritus of human communication and interaction, then they will naturally change as the mechanisms for communication change. Society's priorities, including for the archival record, will have to alter as its culture adapts to new ways of communicating and interacting. Inevitably, the work of the archivist -- the agent responsible for the documentary record -- must evolve to keep pace with the records in his care and the society he serves. The archivist must recognise and adapt to these technical and cultural changes.

Is it possible to provide an understanding of archival work, and a definition of archival records, that allows for the evolution of communication and society, a definition that still permits the archivist to identify and adhere to his primary responsibilities? To do this, it is necessary first to examine the concept of archives, as a society's documentary memory, then consider how that concept has changed throughout Canadian archival history. This will lead to an understanding of today's archival orientation. It will then be possible to consider the priorities for the Canadian archival community in the twenty-first century.

Memory, Technology, and Culture

An individual relies on his memory to remember how to drive a car, brush his teeth, or cook a meal. He also relies on his memory to identify himself and his relations to others: relatives, ancestors, friends, and colleagues.³ Similarly, a society relies on its

³ Indeed, two of the great tragedies of human psychology are the diseases of schizophrenia and senile dementia. In both instances, the person afflicted loses his connection with reality, in that he

memory to carry out its regular functions: to support its members, to provide services, or to collect payments. It also uses its memory to distinguish friends from enemies, to protect its geographical or cultural boundaries, or to promote the community's well being.

Most individuals depend on their mind to help them preserve and resurrect memories. Once taught an action, a person remembers the sequence of events necessary to repeat it. Once he has met people or experienced an event, he remembers the names and dates, faces and places, events and ideas, as much or as little as he needs to carry out his functions. Sometimes an individual must 'record' information, in order to remember. For example, to remember events beyond his own experience, such as the actions of others or the lives of his ancestors, he may have to write himself a note, or take a photograph, or otherwise 'document' the information.

A society also 'remembers' names, dates, and events. The various pieces of information a society remembers form its 'collective memory.' It has been argued that societies are defined by their collective memory; they are 'information-processing systems.'⁴ A society is simply a collection of individuals, brought together out of some commonality: geography, politics, interests, and so on. But a society is not formed until those individuals communicate their individual memories and create, and preserve, a collective memory. Thus communication systems are at the heart of the formation of a collective identity.

As technology changes, its methods of communication also change, and so the society itself changes. Harold Innis argued that the means of communication a society uses determines its particular bias or orientation. For example, societies that made use of durable but difficult-to-transport media, such as clay, stone and parchment, were bound to a certain time and place, whereas societies that used light, transportable media, such as papyrus and paper, were better able to move themselves and their knowledge.⁵ Marshall

is unable to rely on his memory to tell him his origins, his identity, and his relationship to other people.

⁴ Garth S. Jowett, 'Communications in History: An Initial Theoretical Approach,' *Canadian Journal of Information Science* 1, 1 (1976): 11.

⁵ Ibid.

McLuhan claimed that the development of new technologies affects the way humans associate with each other, particularly the way they communicate and maintain relationships. Printing, for example, opened a world of ‘continuity, uniformity and repeatability’: more than one person could read the same thing at the same time. With the invention of the printing press, the relationships between people, especially the balance of power, was irreversibly altered.⁶

The mechanisms a society uses to document its collective memory depend on two factors: the communications technologies available to that society, and the particular culture of that society. Communications technologies are the tools used by a society to interact with its members and others and to document that interaction. A society’s culture is composed of the group of customs it observes and the emphasis it places on them. To compare two extreme examples, there is an aboriginal society in Australia that uses ‘songlines,’ or communication by song, to transmit information over vast distances. In Canada, the university community increasingly relies on electronic mail for professional and personal communications. The Australian society may have to wait some time for its communications to reach their destinations; Canadian academics enjoy instant ‘conversation’ with colleagues across the corridor and across the country. Thus the cultural orientation and nature of the two societies is governed in large part by the technologies used.

As methods of communication and interaction change, so too will the methods used to record them. The nature of the ‘record’ that forms a society’s collective memory depends wholly on these technological and cultural factors. Before the advent of the technology of writing, for example, oral traditions formed the customs of non-literate societies. The remembrancer, the shaman, and the storyteller actively preserved and transmitted the history of their community. The tools used to document that collective memory have included stories, songs, artifacts, and icons.

⁶ See, for example, Marshall McLuhan, ‘The Printed Word,’ in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London, UK: Routledge, 1994): esp. p. 177.

Writing transformed the nature of communication and literacy, and the nature of the individual and collective memory. As M.T. Clanchy has noted, the meaning of the word 'record' itself changed as technology changed. 'In the twelfth century,' he noted, 'to "record" something meant to bear oral witness, not to produce a document.' By the next century, a record had come to mean 'a predominantly written procedure.'⁷ With the invention of the technology of writing, society came to rely on the written record as evidence and information.

Writing brought a reduction in the importance of oral traditions, and storytellers were replaced by record keepers. But for centuries the majority of people could not read or write, and so the task of remembering and documenting past events was the responsibility of a limited, literate group. Records were not widely used, and so they did not necessarily need to be publicly accessible. As Clanchy noted, 'records had not originally been made for utilitarian purposes, measurable in cost-benefit terms. Rather they had been pledges to posterity.'⁸ An elite few controlled and managed not only the record but the information within it. They saw the record not as existing to serve their fellow citizens but to capture the 'memory' of their society for future generations. Only gradually, as documents were created and began to accumulate, did a growing number of people begin to depend on them for information. More and more people learned to read and write. Soon the written record replaced oral testimony as legally binding and socially acceptable, and a written, documented culture evolved.⁹

⁷ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 56-57.

⁸ *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (London, UK: Edward Arnold, 1979), p. 147.

⁹ Socrates was critical of the use of writing. In *Phaedrus*, he told the story of a conversation between Thamus, the king of Egypt, and the god Theuth, the inventor of letters. Thamus chastised Theuth for his reliance on the new tool of writing: 'This invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practise their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are not part of themselves will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise.' *Phaedrus* 274C-275B, quoted in Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, UK: Pimlico, 1992), p. 52.

Memory, Technology, and Canadian Society

How has this relationship between technology, society, and culture affected the Canadian archival tradition? Canada's cultural orientation and the changing nature of its communications technologies have had a direct effect on the nature of its archival work. The role of archives has changed as Canadian society has changed. There have been three distinct phases. In the first, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Canada sought to establish a distinct identity and culture in the face of geographical and technological limitations. In the second, in the mid 1900s, Canada identified changing administrative needs, brought about by advancing communications technologies, but it also sought to promote the sense of public responsibility that was quickly becoming part of its national cultural identity. In the third phase, in the late twentieth century, Canada is facing the reality of new communications technologies, which are affecting its economy, its politics, and its cultural identity in ways never before envisioned.

Archives and the Creation of a Nation

For the first two hundred years of European activity in Canada, there was no sense of society. Voyagers and missionaries, soldiers and government representatives travelled the land, exploring and converting, conquering and settling. Native people, with their own established oral cultures and means of preserving their community memory, were either amalgamated into or alienated from European settlements. But for many years Europeans did not establish political or social roots. Capitals were transferred and settlements moved as governmental and personal fortunes changed. Until towns and cities were developed, with their attendant institutional and bureaucratic structures, there was no sense of a Canadian community, distinct and separate from another community, be it English or French, American or Native.

By the mid 1800s, Canadians were sufficiently settled to search for a distinct identity. Canada recognised its historical connections with Britain and France and saw itself as a new frontier, blending the best of both histories and cultures. It was civilised,

increasingly sophisticated, and anxious to demonstrate its growing refinement. The time came to create and preserve a collective memory that was distinctly Canadian.

As Canadians sought to document their historical roots, the western world was reacting to changes in the nature of historical methodology. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, scientific history -- a history based on facts not myths -- was gaining prominence. To serve the new historical scholarship, and to preserve the new country's cultural memory, historical evidence had to be in the form of archival records: government reports, military despatches, personal correspondence.

Where were these records to come from? Unlike England or France or Germany, Canada did not have vast quantities of historical materials sitting in government offices, awaiting scholarly review. Canada had to go looking for its history. Thomas Akins and Douglas Brymner began their archival careers looking for lost and neglected records. They did not begin by arranging and describing historical records held by the government; these records were too few and too new. To them, the real history, the colonial history, lay in records in England and France, perhaps in the United States, or even in lost and forgotten storage vaults in Canada's former colonial capitals. Archival work was detective work, a mystery to be solved.

The technologies available for communication and documentation at that time were primarily writing and printing. Mechanical copying or photoreproduction had not yet been invented. Canadian archivists relied on hand copying of records to secure historical information from remote sources. As a result, the vast majority of records stored in Canadian repositories were copies; little distinction was made between official and non-official records, or between 'public' and 'private' materials. In the search for a Canadian identity, diaries and journals were equally as informative as despatches and reports. Archivists copied all historically relevant materials, regardless of their origins, preserving the information and protecting it against loss or damage by means of reproduction.

Another important cultural factor in the orientation of Canadian archives was the country's great size and limited population. Communities had emerged in pockets, often

with few links to each other. Identities were more regional than national. In an effort to create a cohesive culture out of these disparate populations, archivists such as Brymner and Doughty sought to create a national treasure house, which would preserve the records of Canada's regions and, by so doing, instil a sense of national identity.

The Dominion Archives became the heart of Canada's historical memory. Its mandate was to acquire every manner of object available, from public and private records to artifacts, works of art, photographs, costumes, and medals. Its interest was national; its collecting territory international. Archival records were defined as anything identified by the archivist as worthy of preservation. The primary orientation of the Archives was history; the best archival training the study of history. Copying, publishing, and exhibiting were all essential archival functions. The Archives was the storeroom for Canada's collective memory.

Archives, Bureaucracy, and Nationalism

By the mid-1900s, technology and culture again worked together to redefine the nature of archives in Canada. A variety of techniques were developed for the production and reproduction of documents and images. The invention and widespread use of wireless telegraphic and telecommunications systems, including the telephone, increased the speed at which people could communicate. The creation of microphotography, typewriters, multiple copy carbon paper systems, and photoreproduction machines meant not only that records could be created faster and in greater quantities but that they could also be retained and reproduced indiscriminately. The records explosion of the Second World War was simply the tip of a large and growing communications-based iceberg.

Along with these technological developments came a change in the orientation of Canadian society. Much of the population of Canada identified with regional identities first, national identities second. The noted Canadian historian J.M.S. Careless spoke of the 'persistence of regionalism,' arguing that 'the true theme of the country's history in

the twentieth century is not nation building but region building.’¹⁰ As provinces and regions desired their own level of autonomy and sought to preserve their own identity, they established their own cultural institutions, including archival repositories.

In an effort to shore up a fragile sense of unity, the Canadian government accepted responsibility for a wide range of national concerns, from health and social welfare to culture and the arts. Government funding programmes were established, and government-funded organisations -- from unemployment offices to ballet companies -- were created. Both federal and provincial governments recognised the need to support community endeavours, in order to preserve some sense of Canada. While the private sector was not discouraged from developing its own initiatives, it was not encouraged.

In light of these technological and cultural realities, the Canadian archival world was itself redefined. The concept of archival records narrowed as other agencies, such as museums, libraries, and galleries, were established, and artifacts, books, and works of art gradually moved out of the archival sphere. Archives became the records of individuals or agencies, preserved for their continuing value. Governments expressed concern for records management, as their storerooms were filled less and less with the treasures of society and more and more with the castoffs of various departments. The historical community applauded the growing concern for public records. Not only was records management essential to the improvement of office systems but, more importantly, how else would historically valuable records be identified and preserved? The expansion in the number of repositories across the country was also well received. Provincial archives were better suited to take responsibility for the records within their provincial geopolitical boundaries.

As provincial and local institutions emerged, they followed the national model, acquiring a broad range of public and private records. Conflicts arose over who should be acquiring what. Canada balanced two concepts: public responsibility for society’s documentary heritage and the validity of regional identities, in the concept of total

¹⁰ J.M.S. Careless, ‘“Limited Identities” in Canada,’ *Canadian Historical Review* 50, 1 (March 1969): 9.

archives. According to the total archives concept, Canadian archival repositories were to care not only for government records, throughout their life cycle, but also for the 'collection of historical material of all kinds and from any source.'¹¹ Total archives sanctioned archival responsibility for the management of government records. But it also endorsed, vigorously, the role of the government in the acquisition and preservation of the collective memory of society, regardless of origins. The national repository was no longer the centre of Canada's documentary heritage, but the public sector still had a responsibility to protect that heritage.

Archives, Technology, and the Narrowing of Identities

The years from the 1970s to the 1990s have witnessed the most significant changes in Canadian society, and Canadian archives, in the twentieth century. Computer technologies have transformed completely the nature of communication and information, forcing a reconsideration of the purpose and nature of archival work. There has been a continual devolution of community identities, from provincial to regional to local. This redefinition of identity has even reached the archival world; a professional archival community has emerged from the historical and scholarly world of its predecessors. As the identity of the nation has diminished, the identities of its component parts, from regions to communities to professions, has increased.

The computer has fundamentally changed the means and nature of communication and information in society. The computer is having as significant a cultural impact in the twentieth century as writing and printing had centuries before. Computers allow the storage, manipulation, and instant transmission of vast quantities of information. They permit access by the masses to data that might previously have been restricted or at least inaccessible. Computers have been seen as equalising society by liberating information, at least for those people with access to the necessary technology.

¹¹ Wilfred I. Smith, 'Introduction,' *Archives: Mirror of Canada Past* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 9-10.

The advent of computer technology has also affected the economics of society. Automation allows for global communications, promoting wider trade boundaries and broader financial liaisons. The global village is a reality in the sphere of business and economics. As a result, the public sector in particular has had to review and revise its mechanisms for communication and interaction. This has taken time and cost money; it has also forced a review of the history of extensive public spending in Canada. In a more streamlined, more competitive world environment, Canada has found it can no longer afford the vast array of social and cultural programmes it had supported for so many years.

Computers technologies have changed society in other ways. With the opportunity to manipulate, store, and reuse information has come the danger of abuse. As information becomes more readily available, the protection of personal privacy becomes imperative, to avoid the spectre of Orwell's 'Big Brother.' The protection of information has become a high priority. Access to information legislation is one reaction to the dangers of a technologically driven society. Such legislation not only changes the mechanisms with which a society communicates; it also changes the culture of that society. It demands more and more public accountability and risks emphasising disharmony and conflict over communication and cooperation.

Automation has shortened the distances between individuals, allowing for global communications, but this narrowing has had an unusual effect. In an effort to maintain an identity within an increasingly homogeneous world, communities have increasingly perceived themselves as belonging more to regions or communities, or even to cities or towns, rather than to provinces or the nation. As Nancy Adler noted, 'people increasingly answer the question "Who am I?" at a level smaller than the nation-state.'¹²

Thus the archival world is in a state of flux. The reality of economics and society in 1995 has led to the growth of an institutional orientation in archival practice. As

¹² Nancy J. Adler, *Globalization, Government and Competitiveness*, The John L. Manion Lecture, Canadian Centre for Management Development (Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994), p. 6.

society has reoriented its vision inward, instead of outward, so too have many public archival agencies turned in, concentrating on the management of an increasingly complex institutional record rather than the acquisition of an even more ambiguous conglomerate of non-institutional records. But at the same time there has been a continual growth in the number of local archival repositories, be they institutional, regional, or community based. The 200 repositories identified by the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives in 1980 had risen to 627 by 1989. The devolution of community identity has moved to the local level. As communities see themselves as having a culture and identity distinct from others -- the nation as a whole, their provinces or other regions -- they seek ways to communicate and to document that communication.

The rise in both institutional and community archives is a natural and inevitable response to the technological, economic, and cultural changes that have affected Canadian society. In part to address these changing realities, the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives in 1980 recommended the establishment of a comprehensive archival system, to accommodate the reality of records management and institutional records care and to allow for the acquisition and preservation of a wider societal record. The Canadian Council of Archives was established and to serve as the vehicle for this coordinated archival system. But within ten years of its creation, this Council had cancelled one of its key programmes, the development of an acquisition strategy. Council representatives advocated, instead, the development of a network of institutional archives, each responsible only for its own records and answerable to its own creating agency. This position has been rejected by the National-Provincial-Territorial Archives Committee, which in December 1995 stated a belief in the value of preserving both public and private records, to provide a balanced documentary heritage.

Seeking a Definition of Archives

Thus in 1996 the Canadian archival community seems schizophrenic. On the one hand there is unprecedented growth in the number and nature of archival repositories across the country, both institutional and acquisition-oriented. On the other hand, the

leaders of the archival community have expressed concern that society's record, particularly the private record, is in danger and deserving of protection. What seems to be missing is an expression of the purpose of archival work that allows for technological and cultural changes but also recognises the value of archival records as part of society's collective memory. Before formulating a definition of archives that embraces both total and institutional archives, a discussion of the nature and purpose of the archival record is necessary.

The Nature of Archival Records

Archival records exist as a mechanism to preserve a collective memory. A literate society preserves documentary information in order to remember. The impetus to preserve a collective memory is a natural and inevitable part of the identification of a societal identity; as soon as a community sees itself as distinct from other communities, as soon as it identifies its 'self,' it will seek ways to prove that existence, to itself and to others.

As mentioned earlier, an oral society may preserve its memory through mechanisms such as stories, artifacts, art, and music. A literate society relies not only on those visual and oral mechanisms but also on archival records, literature, journalism, and other documentary tools to manage its collective memory. The management of the entirety of this collective memory requires the preservation of a vast expanse of materials, in many different forms and media.

Archival records, then, are one part of a society's collective memory. How can they be defined? They cannot be defined by their physical format or media, such as 'textual' records or 'paper-based' artifacts. To restrict the concept of records within physical boundaries is to limit the potential for preserving society's communications. Who would have guessed in 1872 that the Dominion Archives would one day house films and videotapes, sound recordings and electronic records? Who can say today what a record will look like in one hundred years? The archival world cannot meet the realities of culture and technology without an understanding of the archival record that is

unrestricted by form or type. Rather than define archival records as a type of object, it is better to define them on the basis of the reason for their creation, use, *and* preservation. It is first necessary to understand the nature of records.

At the moment an action or transaction takes place, an individual or a community (also called a society, or a juridical person) may choose to *document* the action. To document simply means to preserve the information in order to establish it as a fact. The decision to document is based on a range of concerns. Is there a legal reason for documenting the process? A financial requirement? Was it interesting and so worth noting? Is it necessary to be able to remember that action days or weeks or years later, long after the human brain might have expunged the memory? Does someone else need to know about the action, and is it easier to document it than convey it orally?

The words 'document' and 'documentary' distinguish records from other forms of communication and interaction. Natural speech is normally not documented. Art is the deliberate production of objects, including paintings, music, and film or television productions. Artifacts are man-made objects such as tools or furniture, created for utilitarian purposes. While these forms of expression can provide information, and while they are essential components of a society's collective memory, they were not created in order to document an action or transaction.

The process of documenting an action provides *evidence* that the action took place. Evidence of that action may be required for legal or financial purposes, as a memorial for later use, or simply for personal interest. Evidence simply means to establish a fact. Documentary evidence is a fact that has been recorded. There are many types of evidence. For example, a Native winter count blanket contains an ongoing record of the number and type of animals hunted by a particular tribe. In spite of its physical size and woollen medium, the blanket serves as evidence within that society. In an oral society, a chant or song may document the lineage of a family; it too serves as evidence within that society.

Evidence becomes the *record*: the documentary evidence of the actions and transactions of individuals or communities. The documentary process need not be

written. The evidence need not be solely for legal or administrative purposes. If a society decides to document an action, if it decides to create evidence, then it is creating a record, be it paper-based, electronic, oral, visual, or artifactual. It is the values and orientation of the society in question that determines whether or not an item or object can be considered a record.

Not all records are worth keeping. There are records that must be kept for legal reasons, for financial accountability, for short-term evidence. But only a small percentage of records need to be retained any longer. The decision to preserve records is a societal judgement. There is no natural law that ensures the preservation of records. Without intervention by humans no collective memory of any kind would exist. As argued earlier, society defines itself by its recognition of self and its desire to sustain and perpetuate itself. *Archival records* form that small percentage of documentary evidence that a society has deemed worthy of retention, in order to perpetuate itself.

The mechanisms for determining what records are kept is at the heart of the twentieth-century archivist's dilemma. So little has survived of medieval records that virtually everything is worth preserving. The quantity of original records from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Canada was so meagre that copying received a higher priority than appraisal and selection. In 1995, the plethora of records available for selection is practically beyond human comprehension. It is no wonder that appraisal has become the single most important, and contentious, issue in archival management.

According to the perception presented above, archival institutions acquire and preserve those records that are considered significant to their contemporary society. Like libraries, art galleries, museums, schools, and universities, archival institutions both affect and are affected by societal priorities. Brymner copied colonial records because his society demanded historical evidence, and the technologies available to him did not allow other options. The Massey Commission advocated governmental responsibility for both public and private records because it recognised the reality of the paper boom but it felt Canadian society needed the cultural support provided by broad archival mandates. The Symons Commission recommended university-based archival repositories because

society's priorities at the time included the improvement of the Canadian academic and professional communities. In 1995, the Canadian Council of Archives oriented itself more to institutional records care because society appeared more concerned with accountability and evidence than culture or community. But the continuing rise in the number of community-based archival institutions, and the proclamation by leading national and territorial archivists of the importance of preserving both public and private records, serve as indications that society still values the sustenance of its culture and identity.

As the American archivist Kenneth Thibodeau has suggested, there is more to archival preservation than administrative service. The archival value of records, he has claimed, lies not in their administrative origins; rather 'it is value *apart* from the original context.' The unique function of archival repositories, he has argued, is to preserve records for the future:

Archives serve generations yet unborn; whose information needs and interests are yet undefined ... it would be shortsighted to suppose that we could serve the future by staying within the narrow scope within which organizations create and keep records.¹³

Given the definitions of *document*, *evidence*, and *record* provided above, and given an acceptance that society determines its collective memory by the types of documentation it chooses to preserve, it is now possible to offer a definition of archival records that transcends medium, form, and time. *Archival records* can be defined as: the records of individuals or communities preserved for their enduring societal value. That societal value is defined as an importance to the society's collective identity, be that society a nation, a province, a regional community, or a tribe.

Administration and Advocacy

Implicit in the vision of archival records presented above is the belief that an individual or a society will inevitably impose a value judgement on the selection and

¹³ K. Thibodeau, 'To Be or Not To Be: Archives for Electronic Records,' in D. Bearman, ed., *Archival Management of Electronic Records, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 13* (1991): 3, 12-13.

retention of records. To focus solely on the care of institutional records -- to serve as a records administrator -- imposes one form of value judgement. To acquire records and preserve them in acquisition-oriented repositories -- to serve as a records advocate -- imposes another form of value judgement. Both have their strengths; both have their weaknesses.

The Records Administrator

To take responsibility solely for the records of a clearly defined institution or organisation offers several advantages. It allows for a clear mandate; it is economically and administratively justifiable; it provides a valuable organisational service. It also raises the profile of the archivist within an organisation, ensuring the continuation of the archival programme and sustained management of records. The organisation is well served, and without doubt the archivist benefits. The lure of participation in the information management continuum is no doubt attractive to professionals who may have spent years relegated to the corporate attic or basement, figuratively or literally.

However, there are several risks inherent in a solely institutional orientation toward archival management. The first and most serious is that institutions, if left to establish and maintain their own archival repositories for their own purposes, may not in fact even bother. What impetus is there for them to establish an archives? By law, public agencies must protect their records. Private agencies are governed by no such legislation. Indeed, many would argue that within a democratic society they cannot be governed by any such legislation without violating their rights to autonomy. Similarly, individuals are not legally bound to preserve their records, and any such controls risk their independence.

Some archivists argue that the management of records within an organisation will improve its efficiency and economy and will protect it legally and financially. This is true, but this can be defined as a records management, not an archival, function. Once statutes of limitations have expired, once records are no longer required for administrative purposes, what reason is there for anyone to keep them? The only reason is out of a sense of identity, history, or a public good. Archivists who promote the evidential value of

records risk the loss of the very records they strive to preserve, for creators can easily argue that once legal requirements have been met the records may be destroyed.

Even if the records are kept, the institutional orientation can lead to another danger. The records left may be limited and inaccessible to the public. Public institutions are not only required to preserve records; they are also compelled by access to information legislation to make information publicly available. Private institutions and individuals are not governed by such legislation. It is unlikely they ever will be, for it is not possible to legislate a recognition of one's place in society or one's relationship to a collective memory. Again, the participation by private agencies in the archival community is dependent on their own goodwill and interest.

When archival institutions were recognised as socially and culturally valuable, this goodwill was generally prevalent. After all, archival repositories were traditionally established in order to make their records available. It was a normal practice for records to be transferred from individual or corporate ownership to collective management, usually at public expense. But as evidential, legal, and records management concerns rise to the fore, the wider social value of records seems to be a lesser priority. To insist that records be retained within institutional archives not only denies the validity of cultural and collective enterprise, evidenced by community repositories, but also risks the loss of part of society's collective memory, by destruction or restricted access. It is a reality that some of the most totalitarian regimes in the world have some of the most extensive, and least accessible, archival collections, often housed in active institutional archival repositories.

There are other dangers inherent in an institutional orientation in archival repositories. If institutional archival repositories determine their appraisal criteria on the basis of legal or evidential accountability, the quantity and nature of the records retained may, by definition, be limited. It is only a recognition of the enduring personal or societal value of archival records, a value that extends beyond the law, that allows for the preservation of more than the narrowly evidential minimum.

Another drawback to an institutional approach is that ‘accountability,’ ‘evidence,’ and ‘continuous proceduralized custody’ are all institutional concepts. Individuals, families, and community groups are not necessarily institutions, and they do not act like institutions. The way to preserve the records of individuals and communities, short of establishing an archival repository for each of the 26 million people in Canada, is for groups to work together to develop community or cooperative archives. This is not only a logical reality but it is also the direction archival work is taking as identities devolve to smaller segments of society. These cooperative institutions will be acquisition-based repositories; their holdings will come from the community.

If the institutional model is followed, these community archives risk damaging the integrity and authenticity of the records in their custody, simply by virtue of acquiring them. But if the concept of collective memory is reinforced, then these community archives are natural and inevitable. Hugh Taylor, for instance, has urged that archival repositories orient themselves away from geopolitical boundaries and toward more natural bioregional divisions. He criticizes the emphasis of public institutions at the expense of ‘valuable yet desperately vulnerable evidence from small organizations, mostly voluntary, which are the change agents of our society.’¹⁴

The Records Advocate

The other vision of archival management is that archival repositories serve as one agency among many for the preservation aspects of society’s collective memory. This vision is premised on the belief that there is a wider societal need to keep a collective memory, by preserving and making available a wide range of records, both government and private, institutional and individual. Archival repositories exist not just to preserve records but, more importantly, to make them available to society. Records are kept to ensure a broad societal accountability. Acquisition is a valid component of this archival vision.

¹⁴ Hugh Taylor, ‘Reconsidering Acquisition: The Total Archives Concept,’ Commentary at the Association of Canadian Archivists Annual Conference, June 1994, p. 4, copy obtained privately.

Acquisition has been a cultural means to a cultural end, just as records management should be an administrative means to an administrative and cultural end. Acquisition ensures that records at risk are protected; records management ensures that institutional records are well managed. But both functions should ultimately serve society's collective memory. As long as the collective memory is secure and accessible, it matters less whether records are acquired or managed institutionally.

There are drawbacks to this records advocate role. Most often, acquisition-oriented institutions are at least partly funded from public monies; it is clear in the late 1990s that Canadian federal and provincial governments can no longer afford the largesse of earlier years. But this is not of itself a reason to reject acquisition-oriented institutions. One of the negative consequences of the total archives concept, as with the general concept of public funding for social and cultural programmes, is that the emphasis on public funding has served to discourage private incentive. This is perhaps why Canada does not have its share of Carnegie or Rockefeller Foundations. The responsibility for society, including society's memory, has been laid at the feet of the governments, which are increasingly ill-equipped to manage such a responsibility.

It is also increasingly difficult in modern society for acquisition-oriented archival repositories to justify their acquisition decisions. It has been argued that the only way to preserve a balanced and objective record is not to impose any judgement on the appraisal process. The values of the creating agency are the only values relevant in determining which records to keep and which to destroy. Similarly, it has been argued that the very act of acquiring non-sponsor records invalidates their archival purity, by imposing external ideologies on them.

This argument stems in part from the world of postmodernism and deconstructionism. It is a product of the belief, in the 1990s, in relative realities. Postmodernism has claimed that history is fatally flawed because, since 'there is no absolute, total truth, there can be no partial, contingent truths.'¹⁵ It is undeniable that

¹⁵ Gertrude Himmelfarb, in *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 135.

value judgements are imposed when records are appraised and when they are acquired. But, as has been argued earlier, this is part of the essence of archival work; archival records reflect the perspectives of their society and so are not, and cannot be, impartial. For an archival repository, or the archival community, to focus only on the care of institutional records in order to avoid making value judgements -- even though other records are lost in the process -- is to abdicate its crucial role as society's remembrancer. Archivists must grasp the nettle and ensure their broader societal responsibilities are met.

The Role of Canadian Archives

What, then, is the role of Canadian archival repositories? If archivists accept their wider societal responsibilities, how can they best execute their functions to preserve Canada's documentary memory? In particular, how can this be done in a time of economic restraint and changing government priorities? There are two priorities for the archival community at the approach of the twenty-first century. The first is education, the second cooperation and coordination. Archivists at all levels need education and training in the acquisition, preservation, and management of archival records. Records keepers and creators also need education and awareness of the importance of records management, of the need to preserve records for legal and evidential purposes, and of the societal value of archival records. As well, archivists must work more actively with others responsible for aspects of society's collective memory. The archival community needs to coordinate its efforts and energies, to prevent duplication, to increase productivity, and to provide moral and professional support in a time of fragmentation and devolution.

The Importance of Education

As economies tighten, fewer and fewer repositories will have the resources to employ a professionally qualified archivist. The managers of smaller repositories recognise that they cannot undertake the preservation of their community's records without training and guidance. They do not necessarily need, nor do they want, university

education in archival management. They want to understand how to preserve photographs, how to establish descriptive systems, and how to institute conservation practices. They want to help manage their community's collective memory.

Graduate archival education may be valid in certain contexts, but it can never become the only path to working with archival records. Consider other professions. Physicians must be well educated and licenced to practice. But they are not the only professionals who work in the field of medicine and health. Nurses, paramedics, and licenced practical nurses all undertake legitimate medical work. Some people complete emergency medical courses, such as the St. John's Ambulance courses. These are all valid players in the protection of society's physical well being. What about the law? There are lawyers, legal secretaries, and paralegals. And there is a wide range of 'do it yourself' legal packages for self-help. Accounting? Certified general accountants, certified accountants, bookkeepers, and clerks all manage financial information to their own particular levels.

This should be the same with the archival field. The profession should recognise the validity of graduate, technical, continuing, and community education. If it is not possible to employ a professionally qualified archivist in every repository in the country, then the gap must be filled somehow, or the profession will fail the records and thus fail society. The archival profession must be careful not to limit entrance into the profession to an elite few, who become well-educated but un- or underemployed, as community repositories continue to seek guidance with their own work but cannot or will not employ university graduates. There is scope, for example, for the employment of itinerant archivists and archival advisers, who assist community archives practitioners by teaching, mentoring, advising, and guiding, not necessarily by doing the work themselves. Allowing and encouraging people to participate is as important to the sustenance of a stable and self-respecting society as is the preservation of the actual records. As Thomas Jefferson said in 1820, 'I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their

control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.'

For example, the archival profession's code of ethics should be acknowledged as a valuable means to ensure the preservation of society's collective memory. It should require archivists to protect the record, in order to make it available to society. It should not be used as a tool to exclude people from participating in the process of managing their documentary heritage; to do so would be to destroy the energy and enthusiasm that has led to the creation of 627 archival institutions in Canada.

Perhaps even more important than the education of archival practitioners is the education of records creators. Those people responsible for creating and managing records in the first place also require education and training. Businesses, institutions, and organizations may wish to establish their own repositories. Government officials, including clerks, secretaries, and records officers need to understand both the records management and archival processes. They need to comprehend the principles behind record keeping, the importance of respecting provenance and original order, and the legal, evidential, *and* cultural role records play in their society. In particular, creators of records need to understand the place of archival records in society's collective memory. Only by understanding the wider societal value of records will creating agencies appreciate the need not only to preserve records but also, more importantly, to make them accessible.

Further, the public as a whole must be educated in the value of archival records and their importance as part of society's collective memory. If there is to be a devolution of responsibility and power from government agencies to communities and individuals, then such education is critical to the development of private support for archival work. It is not enough to turn responsibility for archival management to individual institutions, as the CCA has done by ceasing its acquisition planning. If institutions and communities are to take on a responsibility previously managed by the public sector, it is critical that the people in decision-making positions -- in businesses, in associations, or in community groups -- understand why they should support archival programmes.

The Need for Cooperation and Coordination

Cooperation and coordination within and outside the archival sphere is also critical. Cooperation will allow the archivist to clarify his place in the wider job of preserving society's collective memory. Coordination will allow archivists and others to ensure their efforts are well-planned and effective, not reactive or redundant.

In medieval times, as in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Canada, the totality of the memory was often managed by one agent, neither exclusively archivist, nor curator, nor librarian. There was no distinct division of responsibility. As Clanchy noted:

To the modern eye an early medieval archive would have looked more like a magpie's nest than a filing system for documents. Yet however bizarre such objects might look at first sight, the sacristan could no doubt have explained the significance as a memento of each individual object.¹⁶

The creation of distinct professions began in earnest in the nineteenth century. This has continued to the present day, and at the end of the twentieth century we find that, not only in Canada but also in many western countries, society has divided itself into a variety of components and communities. The collective memory is now managed by a diversity of professionals, including archivists, librarians, curators, and historians. This is a reality brought about by changing cultures and technologies. It may change in the future, and archivists -- or curators or librarians -- may again become solely responsible for the totality of the collective memory. But the reality of the late 1990s is the segmentation of professional identities, not their consolidation.

The archival community cannot change this reality. But it can recognise that the care of archival records is only one part of the management of a collective memory. Were a society to emphasise its oral culture, or insist that all citizens communicate electronically, or require the use of parchment or vellum for documentation, the archivist would be unwise to dismiss as non-archival those technologies that did not conform to his concept of the archival record. The management of a society's archival memory requires communication and cooperation with other archivists and with the managers of the myriad other aspects of society's memory.

¹⁶ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 127.

The vision of the Canadian Council of Archives' national acquisition strategy was to help the archival community work together to preserve the country's documentary memory. This vision should become a reality. Coordinated communications between archivists is essential. Union lists, whether paper or electronic, are not enough, for they only document what has *already* been received, not that which is missing. The development of planned mandates, coordinated strategies, and regional groups will better serve the preservation of a wide range of archival records.

Any strategy must recognise the inherent flexibility in the nature and purpose of archival work. It is not enough to carve up the archival pie today, for tomorrow there will be another dozen or more institutions wanting a piece. A static, unchanging acquisition plan is not adequate. A coordinated and dynamic archival programme, one based on communication and cooperation, one which reaches beyond existing archival repositories to the creators of records, will allow for the inevitable, and desirable, changes in archives in the future. Archival advocacy programmes should promote the record, not the archivist; they should encourage a mix of repositories, institutional and organisational, public and private. At the very least, archival associations should expand their horizons, providing educational and informational opportunities not just among themselves but to those individuals or agencies not yet part of the archival sphere.

Rather than isolating themselves in their own professional path, archivists should seek closer coordination with other agents involved with the preservation of society's memory. Librarians, curators, public administrators, records managers, and historians offer a wealth of understanding archivists can only benefit from; indeed, those groups will benefit themselves from increased communications and cooperation with archivists. The similarities among the fields far exceed the differences.

In working cooperatively with other professionals, archivists must also recognise that there are many component parts to society's collective memory. Some of these, whether 'archival' or not, may arrive on the archivist's doorstep. As Hugh Taylor noted, the archivist will inevitably manage much that is not strictly archival. Archivists must accept the reality that ephemera, artifacts, and publications will cross their paths. Rather

than reject these as 'non-records,' they should accommodate them as necessary to protect society's heritage. Some repositories have acknowledged the diversity of their holdings by establishing 'historical resource collections,' wherein they preserve those materials that do not conform but are still of value. This area of archival work should be explored and, perhaps, expanded, not ignored or reduced.

Archives in a Democratic Society

Democracy is defined as government by the people. To remain democratic, society must document its actions. That evidence must be controlled by the people, either through public servants acting on their behalf, or through collective actions by groups of individuals. Canada is a democratic society, and for many years it has managed its archival heritage in a democratic fashion. Public institutions have preserved records, on behalf of the people. Records are used for purposes beyond any archivist's imagination. Genealogists, journalists, historians, novelists, scientists, and physicians all use records: anyone can and does use archival records for any reason. A democratic society acknowledges and encourages all these uses. Archival records do not exist for accountability, for academic research, or for family history. They exist for no other reason than that they were created and that society then chose to preserve them as part of its collective memory.

But records often do not exist for long without some form of intervention. Acquisition has long been an important component of archival work, as societies have recognised the wider societal value of their records, established repositories to care for them, and engaged archivists to manage them. Canadian archivists have coined the phrase 'total archives' to refer to a collective responsibility for records, but this is in fact simply an example of collective action to preserve society's memory. It is democracy at work.

The drawback of total archives, and of an acquisition orientation, is that it has not allowed for individual or community responsibility. It has been a centralised practice, one which lost its validity in an increasingly decentralised world. But on the other hand,

the drawback of an institutional orientation, one that rejects the validity of acquisition, is that can result in a narrow, legally oriented, inaccessible archival record. An emphasis on organisational requirements can lead to a diminishment of societal responsibilities. A sense of collectivity does not automatically emerge from a myriad of institutions.

The vision of an archival system allows for this collective responsibility; this is a vision that should be nurtured and expanded. It should not matter whether records are housed in 'public,' 'private,' 'institutional,' or 'community' repositories. Private institutions may care for their own records. Community repositories may acquire non-institutional records. Public archives may offer leadership and guidance. Archival professionals may act as educators and advisers. As long as the end goal is service to Canada's collective memory, then a variety of mechanisms may be evolved to execute the task.

Hilary Jenkinson, often cited as the prophet of an institutional archival orientation, himself advocated a broader role for archival records. Writing to a colleague in 1946, Jenkinson argued that:

Neither I nor any good Archivist can fail to be aware that Archives in their later stages are preserved principally in order that Students may use them: and that the Students' interests and needs must therefore be ultimately the governing consideration. We may regret this because it interferes with our work for the safety of the documents (it would be much easier, for example, to deal with the mildew problem at the Record Office if we never had to produce any documents to searchers): but we are not such fools as to let that influence us unduly.¹⁷

We should heed Jenkinson's words and not let ourselves be 'unduly' influenced by administrative or institutional concerns. The key to a valid and valuable archival system is not prescriptions or restrictions. It is not rules and regulations. The key is flexibility, a flexibility based on the realization that archival records serve many purposes to many people. A civilized society allows for differences and variations among its

¹⁷ Jenkinson to Professor F. M. Powicke, Oriel College, Oxford, 22 January 1946, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Records, HMC 1/219, Public Record Office. Jenkinson's rejection of an historical orientation for archivists has also been overstated in recent years; in the same document Jenkinson states that 'no Archivist can do his job efficiently without learning a little History deliberately ... and a good deal incidentally It would be unwise to try and prevent the Archivist practising occasionally the metier of Historian.'

people, and it strives to promote harmony among them by rejoicing over the differences as well as the similarities. The archival world must also allow for these variations. It must recognize the validity of public, institutional, and personal records. It must encourage the preservation of all, in the manner best suited to serve society's collective memory, not archival definitions or theories. Archives are one part of society's collective identity. A collective approach, therefore, is essential. In the archival world, the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS

<i>NAME</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>POSITION OR INSTITUTION AT TIME OF INTERVIEW, AND LOCATION OF INTERVIEW</i>
ATHERTON, Jay	25/10/93	Special Advisor to the National Archivist, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, ON
BAPTIE, Sue	27/09/93	City Archivist, City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, BC
BEYEA, Marion	15/08/94	Provincial Archivist, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB
BOVEY, John	23/09/93	Provincial Archivist, British Columbia Archives and Records Service, Victoria, BC
BRANDAK, George	17/09/93	Curator of Manuscripts, Special Collections and University Archives, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
CARROLL, Carman	11/08/94	Provincial Archivist, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS
CAYA, Marcel	29/10/93	University Archivist, McGill University Archives, Montreal, PQ

COOK, Terry	12/10/93	Director, Records Disposition Division, Archives and Government Records Branch, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, ON
COOKE, Owen	27/10/93	Chief Historical Archivist, Directorate of History, National Defence, Ottawa, ON
CRAIG, Barbara	2/11/93	Faculty of Library and Information Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON
DANIELLS, Laurenda	6/10/93	University Archivist (retired), Special Collections and University Archives, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
DRYDEN, Jean	2/11/93	Chief Archivist, United Church Archives, Toronto, ON
DURANTI, Luciana	15/12/93	School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
EASTWOOD, Terry	14/12/93	School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
KEIRSTEAD, Robin	10/11/93	Manager, Corporate Records and Archives, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Kitchener, ON
KULA, Sam	1/09/94	National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, ON
LARADE, Sharon	8/11/93	Regional Archivist, Region of Peel Archives, Brampton, ON
MACDERMAID, Anne	3/11/93	University Archivist (retired), Queen's University Archives, Kingston, ON
MCCARDLE, Bennett	4/11/93	Manager, Public Service Section, Archives of Ontario, Toronto, ON

MCDONALD, John	13/10/93	Director, Information Management Standards and Practices, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, ON
MOORE, Danny	26/10/93	National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, ON
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